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# THE AESTHETICAL NECESSITY IN LIFE

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# THE AESTHETICAL NECESSITY IN LIFE

*By*  
JAMES H. COUSINS

## THREE LECTURES

**Delivered under the Sir George Stanley Foundation for  
Lectures in Aesthetics in the University of Madras**

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## FOREWORD

The three lectures in this book were delivered in the University of Madras on February 14, 15 and 16, 1944, under the Right Honourable Sir George Stanley Endowment for "lectures on any topic comprised in Aesthetics." I take the opportunity of their publication to offer to the Syndicate of the University my thanks for the occasion thus given me to bring together in a special relationship certain convictions that I have long held, and from various points of view have expressed in speech and writing, regarding the character and function of the arts and crafts, which are the means of expression of the aesthetical aspect of human nature.

In acknowledging the Syndicate's invitation to deliver the Lectures, I wrote: "In the Miller Lectures that I gave in the University some years ago I quoted many authorities on the subject of the Course: 'Beauty, its Nature, Expression, and Fulfilment.' In the Stanley Course of Lectures which I am invited to deliver, I should like to reduce quotation to a minimum and use the opportunity to relate aesthetical fundamentals and principles to the urgent question that the war has forced on us, the question of the nature of the future for which humanity should be preparing. The materials and organisation of life are much talked of; but little is said



of its quality. The aesthetical aspect of the New World-Order is at least as important as the economical or the political." I expressed the wish to bring out this aspect of the matter in three lectures that would indicate the need of the aesthetical element in life, and the manner in which participation in and appreciation of the arts and crafts could beneficently influence the details of life if allowed to do so. My wish was granted; and for the freedom given to me to present the subject in a manner more pragmatical than academical I express special thanks; also for permission to have the Lectures published outside the University.

In the interval between the delivery of the Lectures and their publication, certain matters referred to have been modified. The modification does not, however, affect the principles of which they were illustrations.

*Office of the Art Adviser to  
the Government of Travancore,  
Trivendrum  
JULY, 1944*

J. H. C.

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TO

Captain Bettala Durgiah Naidu,  
Krishnavaniamma, his wife, and  
Lalithamma, their daughter,

in acknowledgment of friendly considerateness that,  
in a time of restriction and anxiety, enabled these  
lectures to be witten in a congenial environment.

LECTURE I

THE AESTHETICAL NECESSITY IN LIFE



## LECTURE I

### THE AESTHETICAL NECESSITY IN LIFE

The association, in the general titles of these lectures, of aesthetics and life may perhaps appear as incongruous as the association of water with oil or of water with fire. The first two do not mix : the other two mix as antagonists. To bring together the cool liquidity of a phase of philosophy and the flambuoyance of what is called life may seem to be asking for the dissolution of one of them and the survival of the other ; the fluidic expression of "cold reason" quenching the ardours of life, or "flaming youth" dehydrating and consuming in its fire the wet blanket of mere thought.

To regard any aspect of philosophy or of life thus would, however, be a mistake, a mistake arising from an extreme, therefore incomplete, idea of both. To the non-philosophical mind the subject of aesthetics may be an academical affair, invented and preserved in books, and, as far as any real use is concerned, disposed of in examinations. This view is held by no congenital philosopher, that is, one to whom philosophy is not merely an external interest but an operation of the mind, a way of looking at things. It has conceivably been encouraged by the division of certain academical studies into pure and applied; the pure being so virginal

that they draw their robes around them in protection from the defiling touch of life. Life, on the other hand, as popularly lived, being a thing of various kinds of fire, would as soon turn to philosophy for a spirited dance-tune to feed its flames, as fire, in order to maintain its heat, would repair to an ice-house.

There is something to be said for each of these views from its own view-point. Certainly, if philosophy is to retain the calm, the clarity, the freedom of thought, the intellectual insight, that will keep it philosophical, it cannot afford to permit the rowdy invasion of its terrain, or the cyclonic disturbance of its atmosphere, by the sensuous obsessions and sensual slaveries that are commonly regarded as means to the enjoyment of life. On the other hand, if life is to proceed as pleasant expenditure, and, in the phrase of a politician of a generation ago, "damn the consequences," it must put up the sign at the door of its cabaret, "No dogs (or philosophers) admitted ;" for philosophy is the intellectual science of consequences, looking "before and after," and applying anticipations of that which is to come to the justification or correction of that which is.

There the metaphysical antithesis of a supposedly lifeless philosophy and an obviously unphilosophical life might have remained as subject matter for future generations of university lecturers. But the least philosophical of human activities, the activity whose official business is not the living of life but its destruction, that is to say, a war, intervened; and, apart from its main purpose of

defeating the enemy, has in four years raised questions that a century of "the piping times of peace" might not have had the courage to raise. One such question is, "What is the matter with thought, that it, the progenitor of action, has brought life to such a pass?" Another question is, "What is the matter with life, that it seeks satisfaction not only in war between nations, but war between communities and sexes and individuals, and in war between man and the animal kingdom?" These questions are being asked the world over with growing insistence. They imply a needed rapprochement between thought and life. It is becoming obvious that neither can exist without the other; that pure science or pure knowledge or pure art or pure anything will fester in self-generated impurity unless purified by the antiseptic of life in its fullest sense; and that life that is merely vital, and directs its activities to the satisfactions of sense rather than the responsibilities of reason, is not the "life more abundant" of which a spiritual teacher spake, but a negation and frustration of the creative and preservative activity that only is eligible for the name of life.

It would appear, indeed, to be part of the vast and drastic movement of our time to bring together, both in antagonism and co-operation, things that heretofore took opposite sides of the road. The coming together of democracy and dictatorship has not yet shown any co-operative tendency. And yet the situation in Italy after the break-up of Fascism would appear to show that while Mussolini passed from his early radicalism to his



self-chosen seat of judgment as Arch Dictator of the Italian people and others, he was but a poor judge of human character and its necessities. Had he read "Social Evolution" by Benjamin Kidd forty years previously he would have learned that dictatorship has a tendency to engender democracy; and there are those in the United States of America who point out that democracy at a pinch can take a turn at dictatorship, albeit an authorised dictatorship. While this tendency to oscillation remains in human organisation, the history of humanity is more than likely to retain its rhythm of war that necessitates an artificial peace being succeeded by peace that leads to "the next war." And this will go on until some teacher of arithmetic has the pluck and power to rub in a simple class-room platitude; that no abstract totalitarianism can exist without taking into the fullest account the nature of its single constituents. Three wild horses plus four heavy elephants plus six buzzing and stinging mosquitoes do not total thirteen anything. And the world of humanity as well as sub-humanity is populated by things, not by abstractions; by the wild horses of freedom, the elephants of inertia, the gadflies of agitation. The platitude, turned the other way round, proclaims that no single constituent could exist without the others that make up the abstract total. If Herbert Hoover's "rugged individualism" were carried to its extreme, the racial problems of the United States would be solved by the simple method of the Kilkenny cats that fought each other down

to the tip of the tail of each. No total can exist without its parts : no part can exist apart from its total. Units are effective only to the extent of their unity with other units. The failure to see this is the secret of the condition of humanity today ; and apparently because of the purblindness of some of the leaders of mankind, a great confusion has come upon the race. The castes, east and west, are being mixed ; and it looks as if the mixture bore, in a world-language, the legend familiar to our unhealthy race, "To be well shaken before taken."

The coming together of former incompatibles may be proceeding, under the compulsion of warfare, in the enemy areas ; but of this no indication comes to us. From the areas of the Allies come frequent anticipations of what is sometimes called "post-war reconstruction," and sometimes, more sonorously and ambitiously, a "New World Order," a title of the future claimed equally by Germany and Japan, but with very different conceptions as to the nature of the Order and the ways of its attainment. Allied anticipations have been mainly organisational, economical and religious. They have visualised groupings of humanity that have to live both together and separately, in locations and climates and cultures through which they express their special racial and national characteristics, but in which they are, in varying ways and degrees, interdependent for physical sustenance and inter-influential in culture. These unofficial adumbrations of the future, though they recognise three

of the essentials of life (its political organisation, economic sustentation and religious aspiration) are rendered ineffective in that separately they lead nowhere, and together they are inadequate. Humanity is not, as has been pointed out by writers on social topics, an *organisation*, which is a mechanical adaptation of life to artificial expediency: it is an *organism*, which is a vital response to necessity. Humanity is not an instrument for the consumption of commodities for the profit of individuals or groups: giving out, even on the physical level, is at least as much a function of life as taking in. Nor is the aspiration of humanity towards a larger life than that of the individual or the race to be stalled and winkered within any stable or loose box of intellectual formulation or emotional attachment.

These lectures are intended as a contribution to the filling of the gap of inadequacy with material from a portion of the field of human nature which is not usually, one might say never, called upon to yield anything substantial to practical affairs. That this omission has been, and will continue to be, a radical mistake is a conviction behind these lectures on the supposedly academical subject of aesthetics. The conviction is based on the plain fact that the qualities of the feelings (that is, of the aesthetical nature) are constant and potent in their influence on action, and that the quality of feeling, and consequently of action, can be raised and purified by the impartation to them of the qualities and characteristics that are inherent in the arts and crafts, which are the ex-

ternal forms of expression of the aesthetical nature. This is the essence of the theme which I shall proceed to develop.

That branch of philosophy called aesthetics was so named by the philosopher Baumgarten (1714-1762) to indicate its special study of the reactions and actions of the feelings in relation to beauty as disclosed by the fine arts (Greek, *aisthanesthia*, to feel or perceive). That is its strictly academical boundary. But in the circumstances of our time, with the ruination of irreplaceable works of art by war, and the threatened sag in taste, quality and action in life as the result of prolonged concentration on death-dealing and destruction, the question already referred to, as to what is wrong with thought, has to be put also to the branch of thought called Aesthetic. The pragmatism of William James is extended from, Does it work? through the scientific enquiry, How does it work? to the question now emerging as the test of all phases of human thought and action in the post-war world. What is the good of its work? Facts without effects are no longer the be-all and end-all of knowledge. The growth of knowledge, in the Tennysonian way, "from more to more," is being superseded by the elevation of knowledge from higher to higher and the drawing of knowledge nearer and nearer: quantity is required to yield to quality, and both to application. The feeling capacity of humanity, which is the organ of Aesthetics, will, if the "next war" is to be averted, have to be

put to school: it belongs to education, which is the development of all the beneficent capacities and the modification if not the elimination of the destructive capacities of the individual; and the beneficent capacities include a *sane* responsiveness to the beautiful in all its forms of manifestation, natural and human.

I underline the adjective *sane* because of a fall from aesthetical sanity that brought disrespect on aestheticism towards the end of last century in the West. There was a time, just before mine, though I remember its petering out, when to be considered aesthetical required peculiar clothes and household paraphernalia and a still more peculiar way of looking at life and of expressing one's look. That primary phase of late nineteenth and early twentieth century aestheticism (of which Oscar Wilde is still the most vividly remembered figure) passed into a secondary phase in which peculiarity was reduced to an occasional velvet jacket and certain mannerisms of hair and hand. But in our time, when sudden or protracted death, and maiming of young manhood and womanhood, the destruction of some of the finest achievements of human vision and skill, the frustration of the dreams of creative idealists, have put the epics and tragedies of the literary imagination into the category of minor poetry, to be an aesthete does not require the dandyism of Wilde or the early diletantism of Yeats. One can be chock-full of feeling in a commonplace suit after reading the daily paper, and be capable of healthy understanding of the vast pre-

posterior things that are taking place in the world around us without having one's countenance "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought."

We must distinguish (as an elementary preliminary to our study) between the feeling that is the subject of aesthetics, and the feeling commonly so called. It is not necessary to go into all the gradations of what we may figuratively call the aesthetical spectrum. In the ordinary sense of the term, feeling is mainly a re-action in the nerve-system to impacts from outside the system—a blow, a pain, a shock. Consciousness becomes aware of the reaction, but consciousness is not its cause. On the other hand, the feeling studied by aesthetics operates from consciousness, and discharges itself through the various bodily powers, including the nerve-system, in substances and forms out of which it creates objects whose characteristic qualities cause them to be called works of art. Ordinary feeling relieves itself in involuntary exclamation: aesthetical feeling relieves itself in deliberate expression.

For the understanding of the nature of aesthetical feeling and the evaluation of its various forms of expression, that is, works of art, we must observe that while we may speak of aesthetical feeling operating from or originating in consciousness (as distinct from the feeling that is provoked by external impacts) this does not mean that such feeling is something self-generated and independent. An impulse or an idea may stir an artist to expression with the enthusiasm of originality;

and without such sense of uniqueness there can be no expression of any distinction or value. But it is axiomatic that one cannot express anything without expressing it by means of something (stone, clay, metal, wood, paint, ivory, strings, paper, pen), and it is equally axiomatic that no impulse or idea is wholly and solely of the imagination, but owes its emergence to a sensitive collaboration between the artistic imagination and its environment. This plain fact should have made impossible the claims put forward periodically by artists that they have no responsibility to their time and kindred, a claim disguised under the term "freedom of self-expression." The same plain fact should make such a spurious claim impossible in the future. Yet it is certain that it will not prevent the art-world from oscillating between the extremes of licence and censorship until, with the coming of educational wisdom, the beneficent revolutionary potencies inherent in the exercise of the creating imagination in the arts and crafts will become one of the first essentials in the education of the young. From such education, it may be prophesied, will come a succession of generations whose taste (which comes of aesthetical feeling) and whose judgment (which comes of aesthetical thought) will be both an intelligent appreciation and criticism that will give the artists of the future unlimited patronage, and at the same time save them from themselves.

The study of aesthetics has two broad aspects that specially concern our subject: (1) the ways and means

of the particular forms of expression through which the protean yet recognisable quality called beauty is brought to light ; that is, the arts and crafts, including literature ; (2) the characteristics inherent in the various arts and crafts, and their potential influences on human feeling, thought and skill. The application of these in life is the core of our enquiry.

It will hardly be considered incongruous if, in a lecture on the branch of philosophy that concerns itself with artistic expression through both material and immaterial means, I call the verbal art of poetry to our assistance in the exposition of the first aspect mentioned above. The following stanzas are from a poem\* suggested by bronzes of Hermes, the messenger of the classical deities, and a dancing faun, that survived the volcanic ruin of Herculaneum and Pompeii in the third century before Christ, and are preserved, one in the museum at Naples, the other in its original position in a courtyard in Pompeii.

Through dissonant life's untutored noise  
He learned to feather music's wing ;  
Bid arch and spire in equipoise  
From shape and stuff anarchic spring ;  
And conjure out of passion's rage  
The ordered traffic of the stage.

\* "Graven Images," by James H. Cousins, in "Collected Poems." Kalakshetra, Adyar, Madras.



By these, through wavering, *Where ?* and *Whence ?*  
He reached a place of spirit-rest ;  
Through chaos glimpsed Intelligence  
No darker than himself possessed ;  
And starred the margin of his night  
With names of everlasting light.

Equal in Turner's golden gleam  
And Wagner's heaven-ascending shout,  
In Benvenuto's jewelled dream  
And gates Ghiberti hammered out,  
In Shakespeare's hoard of human lore  
And spirit-singing of Tagore,

Art seeks, in script that shall endure,  
To write across the page of death  
Beauty's immortal signature.  
This well accomplished, vision saith,  
Body with soul shall sweetly walk,  
And God and man hold friendly talk.

The stanzas are in effect the present lecture in miniature. Through the transformation (they say) that art is capable of making in the stuff of life, the medley of sound becomes music; the anarchy of substance is changed into the order of architecture, and of sculpture, carving and painting; the passions and struggles, the dreams and frustrations, the ideals and despairs of humanity, become the collective matter of the drama and the individual matter of poetry. By these, man is able

to rise above the questioning mind to a direct participation in the life of the universe; and out of that participation, and through the instrumentality of the arts and crafts, have come the creations that have made individuals and epochs renowned for all time; the paintings of Turner (and Ajanta) the music of Wagner (and Thiagaraja), the jewellery of Benvenuto Cellini (and the inlayers of Jaipur), the sculpturing in metal of Ghiberti of Florence (and the wood-carving of the anonymous artificers of Travancore), the drama of Shakespeare (and Kalidasa), the poetry of Rabindranath (and AE). Through these the creative impulse of humanity exerts a pressure that, in its expression in the arts, engenders the universal and eternal quality of beauty. And when beauty is established in life, the natural and inevitable ascension of the quality of life that will follow will eliminate false differences between its material and spiritual aspects; and the unification between the Being of the universe and its fragmentation of the human spirit, towards which humanity aspires, though darkly, will be accomplished.

Assertions that in verse may be tolerated for their music or rhythm or figurativeness, run the risk in prose of provoking the obnoxious term dogma. When prophecy is added, as above, a double offence to logic may appear to be committed. But the arts, that are the materials of Aesthetics, are not essays in logic; their demands on the intellect are mainly analogical: and beauty is not the end of an argument, but the beginning of an expe-

rience. The study of Aesthetics, indeed, might well be conducted in verse to relieve it of the lesser responsibilities of prose. This is not as original a suggestion as it may sound. In the early history of mankind verse did much of the duty of expression and communication and record that later became the business of prose. Three examples (legal, literary and military) from one area of history will indicate this. The laws (those most prosaic matters) of pre-Christian Ireland were recorded in verse; and who knows but it may have been the rhythm of them that influenced Saint Patrick to let them remain so and not to have them turned into the Latin that he brought from Rome in the fourth century. Verse was used by the Irish Bards for inflicting injuries on one's enemies, and probably did them less harm than sharp-edged prose would have done. One of the conditions of recruitment in the national army of Ireland (which kept the provincial armies from dealing with each other through the realistic prose of force) was a knowledge of the Twelve Books of Poetry. It may be that the verse-compilation of aesthetics in English was begun in Browning's poems on European painters and painting, though art-criticism in verse in India goes back to Kalidasa. And there are William Watson's versified criticisms of the poetry of Burns and Wordsworth, Shelley, Matthew Arnold and Tennyson. Meantime, as we are still condemned to prose, I shall drop this digression, historically interesting though it be, and summarise the arts as a step towards realising their characteristics and qualities

and their possible influences on human conduct and institutions.

Many years ago I discovered the curious aesthetical contradiction that the immobile works of art (architecture, sculpture, carving, painting) could only, as I shall explain, be created by mobility on the part of the creators, and appreciated by a responsive mobility on the part of the spectators; whereas the mobile works of art (drama, dance, music, poetry) could only be created and appreciated in a state of immobility. Others, unknown to me, may have discovered the same criss-cross law of art, as Alfred Russell Wallace, the spiritualist, discovered the law of the evolution of forms simultaneously with but unknown to Charles Darwin, the materialist. But I should like to rediscover my discovery on the present occasion as a help to the clearer understanding of the nature of the arts, on which an evaluation of their usefulness in the post-war world, or any world, depends.

If, for example, when Shah Jahan handed over his dream of the Taj Mahal to his master-craftsmen to fulfil in stone and marble, the master-craftsmen had squatted in the meditative manner of poets, and had declined to be drawn into the vulgar fuss and gadding about that building does not seem to be able to get on without, the peerlessly exquisite monument of architectural and decorative beauty would not have come into existence. Conversely, if Saadi, the Persian poet, had found his garden of roses (Gulistan) too quiet and sweet-smelling for the making of poetry, and if, when the impulse to song came

on him, instead of squatting in the meditative manner of poets, he took up chisel and mallet and began to hew junks out of stone or wood, his songs would not have found their way into poetical immortality. That is the creative side of the aesthetical contradiction of mobility and immobility in the arts. On the side of art-appreciation: if, when I went to see St. Peter's Church and the Vatican at Rome, I had acted on the logic of affinity, that since it was immobile I must become immobile in order to know it, and had stood at its door, it would not have disclosed to me its design and magnitude and proportions. To realise its immobility I had to become exceedingly mobile for a day, and furnish my head by developing sore feet. Conversely, on the side of art-appreciation, if, when I wished to absorb with all my mind the essence of Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" I had gone on a quick run along the nearest road, the poetical west wind would have blown where it listeth without my getting any nearer a realisation of the simple anatomy and extraordinary psycho-physiology of the poem as I have learned it in repose; for the art that is in a state of perpetual movement from word to word, thought to thought, feeling to feeling, was created in quiet (one recalls Wordsworth's "emotion recollected in tranquillity") and must be re-created by the reader in quiet or not at all. Here, he who runs may *not* read.

The characteristic of immobility and mobility in architecture and poetry, and of the reverse in its creation and appreciation, which I have pointed out above, is

seen also in, on the one hand, the immobile arts of sculpture, carving and painting, and, on the other hand, in the mobile arts of drama, dance and music. It is not necessary to repeat the comparison. It is sufficient to observe that objects of immobile art are provided with floor-space on which the spectator can exercise the mobility necessary to their appreciation. A statue cannot be seen from one side, or a carving or picture from one angle. Conversely, seating accommodation is provided for the simultaneous seeing and hearing of drama and dance and for the hearing of music, because these mobile arts disclose themselves only to those who submit themselves to immobility. To stand in front of a statue or carving or painting for an inordinate time (that is, to be immobile before the immobile) is regarded as bad manners; so also is to move about at a drama, a dance recital or a concert (that is, to cross the mobile with irrelevant mobility).

This posing of mobility against immobility is by no means the game of aesthetical badminton that it may at first glance appear to be. It brings us, in fact, right to the centre of our subject; the relating of art, both in its creation and appreciation, to the practical matter of living life. If we place the terms mobility and immobility, as we have used them in relation to art, alongside the scientific terms, energy and substance, the philosophical terms, *rajasa* and *tamasa*, the theological terms, soul and body, we shall see that our art terms have respectable neighbours, that they are not lonely fantastic abstractions.

Like the others, they are verbal codes of intellectual communication of the first essentials of human life, individual and collective—the stability that gives assurance to expansion and aspiration, and the complementary elasticity that responds without distortion or breakage to enlargements of the substance and technique of human life, and ascensions of the human spirit. Without the collaboration of these two characteristics, stability and elasticity, life as we know it could not proceed: neither could art. In their collaboration the extremes of rigidity and fluidity are avoided, in life, as in art. Rhythmic vitality (the first canon of old Chinese art, which is mobility shaped by immobility, a river given direction by its watershed and its banks) is made tangible by form, which is immobility given identity by mobility (a hillside made picturesque by the carvings of a torrent). In these respects art and life are synonymous terms, that is to say, life as it should be lived; and this synonymity was in the mind of Nietzsche when, in his great early book, “The Birth of Tragedy,” he uttered the profound truth that “we have our highest dignity as works of art—for only as an *aesthetical phenomenon* is existence and the world eternally *justified*.” (The italics are Nietzsche’s). This, the aesthetical test of speculations towards the future, is, as we shall see, crucial and ultimate.

Within the expressions in the arts which we have seen to be characterised by immobility interacting with mobility (the first producing architecture, sculpture, carving, painting, the second producing drama, dancing

music, poetry), are other characteristics that, like those of stability and fluidity (or elasticity) are fundamentals of art and life. A short consideration of them will serve our purpose.

A work of art is given identity, a separate existence beyond its environment, by unity. A Mohenjodaro vase is one thing, a surrealist painting another. There are frontiers of identity that they cannot cross; and this identity is attained by a unity of relevant characteristics. A "modernistic" metal handle rivetted on a South Indian clay waterpot would turn the latter's exquisite unity of simple form into a mocking caricature; so would an elaborately carved and gilt Victorian frame on one of Abanindranath Tagore's delicate low-toned Omar Khayyam paintings. We must here distinguish between that which is a unity (something united, a relationship of two or more entities) and that which is a simple unity, united with nothing else. A single stroke (the figure one) is not esteemed as a work of art: neither are three strokes side by side. The single stroke does not reveal anything beyond itself, and so does not reveal even itself: for nothing can exist of itself or be understood alone: the three strokes are equally unsuggestive, a mere triplication of the unexpressive single stroke. A unity of similars does not make a work of art: a unity of similars in life would make it a dull affair indeed; no interchange, no variety, no stimulating controversy. A fundamental necessity of art is diversity in unity: this is also a fundamental



necessity of life, otherwise expressible as unity in community.

In the co-operative interaction through which diversity attains the unity of a work of art, and would, if allowed, attain an artistic unity of life, there are two other characteristics, apparently different, yet subtly related; one, *proportion*, more obviously though not exclusively related to material immobility, as in a well-proportioned building, like the lovely Navaratri Mantapam in Padmanabhapuram Palace in Travancore; the other, *harmony*, similarly related to immaterial mobility, as in a harmonious piece of music, such as a sonata by Beethoven or a concerto by Rachmaninoff. Proportion is the assembling and grading of the sub-unitary diversities that constitute an artistic unity, so that things minor will not obscure or distort things major; the small may preserve the large from over-enlargement; and small and large may together make a unity beyond them. This is not only an essential characteristic of art. It is a statement of the essential set-up, or lay-out, of life as an "aesthetical phenomenon." This was behind Yeats' disparaging reference to Maud Gonne, in a poem, in her agitating days in Ireland forty years ago, for setting "the little streets against the great." Politically this may be seen in the perspective of history as inevitable and ultimately effective. But to Yeats, with dramatic proportion in his head ("construction" we then called it), the bringing of the small to the front of the stage was an error of disproportion; it flawed the essential drama; it was artis-

tically deplorable in setting political craftiness against stage craft: and (as Shakespeare had said, anticipating Nietzsche's discovery of life as an "aesthetical phenomenon") "all the world's a stage," and subject to the laws of dramaturgy.

Harmony is the relating of sub-unitary diversities of sound, and the setting of them in tonal groups that, when translated in succession, instrumentally by piano-forte or organ or orchestra, or vocally in duet, trio, quartette or chorus, lead the aesthetical sense of the hearer through a harmonious progression to a realisation of a unity of form and feeling. Harmony is a progression of groups of related sounds, like files of soldiers marching abreast. Its musical associate, melody, is a progression of single sounds (in poetry, of single words) like field-workers in Indian-file up hill and down dale. In western music, harmony and melody move together in the evolution of the theme that the composer expresses through them; but harmony, having to keep in mutual though diverse relationship groups of sounds that change with every step on the way, calls for the exercise of mental faculties of organisation and co-operative progression that melody without harmony does not require.

A study of this aspect of the matter would take us into details beyond our available time. It is only possible to suggest here that the bifurcation of musical history into western harmony and eastern melody, with their distinction as group expression and individual expression, and their reflection in the massings of oil-painting in

the west and the linear feature of water-colour painting in the east, may have relationships with temperamental differences that have made general history what it is. But we must leave this for others to work out, and pass on to the essence of our thesis with just a reference to other features of art, in addition to the fundamental characteristics indicated above, that add to the total effect and share in the creation of the synthetical element called beauty.

In the arts whose medium is substance (stone, wood, metal, fibre), *texture* is added to form, and gives to a work of art an additional characteristic of appearance, which is an ingredient of beauty. But the point about texture in art that relates it to life, and expresses a phase of what we may call aesthetical morality, is the universal repugnance of artists to the hypocrisy of a work of art being made false to its own texture by making it look as if it was the texture of another substance, such as iron grained to look like wood, or what looks like a tree-trunk at the entrance to the Hollywood Bowl made out of cement. A work of art, and a human being who aspires to fulfil his and her obligation to life as an "aesthetical phenomenon," is out of character (as is said on the stage) if a lath-and-plaster background tries to palm itself off as a front of steel or gold, or in any other way pretence usurps reality. This does not apply to scenery and properties in drama, for their "pretence" is an expedient of mental realisation, not of an inferior substance trying to be taken for a superior. A pasteboard crown

on the head of a man, on the stage, is not intended to pretend that it is a golden crown, nor is the wearer of it seeking to be taken as a king, off the stage, and royally treated. Both are suggestions of an imaginative royalty, an indication of the invisible drama through its visible details.

*Colour* is another feature of appearance and ingredient of beauty, from the grey of granite, the blues and greens of the sea, the mixed spectrum of the flowers, to the sapphire of the noonday sky. There are scales of gradation in colour, affinities and disagreements that are the visual counterparts of the aural harmonies and discords of music. Both phases of expression (colour and sound) have subtle influences on the human sensorium; and I shall refer to the medicinal value of them and of other aspects of art in our subsequent lectures. In colour, as in texture, pretence is an offence against aesthetical morality. In Japan, when I was there well-nigh a quarter of a century ago, the story was told, with a touch of aesthetical scorn, of a western visitor asking when the ceiling of a room was going to be painted: the Japanese ceiling being a work of art in timbers whose natural grainings were a perpetual delight in tint and design to which paint or varnish would be an insult. To be "shown in one's true colours" is generally a phrase of reproach, of pretence unveiled; probably because of the common tendency of humans to appear other, and better, than what they in reality are: in art, true colours are an aesthetical virtue.

In the mobile art of music, *tone* is esteemed as a special feature; not the technical interval between sound and sound, but a quality of richness, sonority, sweetness, sharpness, that expresses and induces aesthetical pleasure in appropriate musical circumstances, that is, when sonorous sound expresses profundity of feeling, and not if the sweetness of pure affection is set to a sharp-toned accompaniment. In poetry in English, tone is achieved through the arrangement of long and slender vowels in conjunction with pleasing consonants ("quietude," "response," for example, not "world" or "month"); and this verbal tone is enhanced by alliteration that is in affinity with the picture or idea or feeling of the poem, as in Coleridge's "Rime of the Ancient Mariner."

The fair breeze blew,  
The white foam flew,  
The furrow followed free.  
We were the first  
That ever burst  
Into that silent sea.

Appropriateness is here the aesthetical virtue. There are cross-overs in the use of these terms; the *texture* of the orchestral music of Mozart as contrasted with that of Delius; the bright *colour* of romantic drama and the drab distemper of the problem-play; the *tone* of a painting by Rembrandt or Roy Choudhuri; but the analysis of the cause of these is not essential to our subject.

We cannot overlook the fact that the virtuous characteristics and qualities that have been attributed above to art may be identified in and by other aspects of life. The necessity of the co-operation of substance and movement, that is, the co-operation of the material things of life and their conveyance without let or hindrance between producer and consumer; or the co-operation of capital, which is of the nature of the immobile, with labour, which is incarnate mobility; may be preached by religion, proved by philosophy, demonstrated by science. But the preachment, the proof, the demonstration of these or other aspects of life are abstractions from life; and their application back to life may have to surmount or break down religious or philosophical or scientific barricades. Moreover the interpretation of life by religion, philosophy or science calls for a mental endowment possessed by a small minority of the human race. Art has no such obstruction or limitation. From the rounding of a perfect pot-stick which Socrates would accept as a work of art because it fulfilled its purpose, to the fabricating of quite useless beauty in a tiara for the doomed head of Marie Antoinette, at least two, oftener more, of the characteristics of art (stability, fluidity, unity, proportion, harmony) will be called into activity; and the characteristics will not be born with the activity or be buried in the created object. The qualities of art are not abstractions made frigid by the mind or inflammable by the emotions; they are living, inescapable powers that only await appropriate action for their

fulfilment. We may forget all I have said or shall say on these things in the concentration that is necessary to the modelling of a head in clay or the painting of a tree; indeed the less we are conscious of such matters in the hour of creative joy the more fully will we put ourselves in living rapport with the eternal powers and laws of universal creation. Yet all I have said or shall say, in so far as it is true to the laws of artistic creation and aesthetical appreciation, will go without speech into the working hand, and (which is more to the point of our theme) every stroke delivered with intention, every incision made within a design, every word uttered out of intellectual illumination or high feeling, will strike, cut and echo back into the consciousness of the worker, carrying with them the qualities inherent in the work in hand, and will enlarge and intensify and elevate the inner capacities from which the outer activities proceed. This is the aesthetical law behind the use in the United States of America of art-crafts for the turning of children born to the inheritance of a criminal life into good citizens: it is also the law of art-appreciation, as distinct from art-creation, behind the ancient recommendation by an India seer of an appropriate work of art by which, through looking on the particular quality represented in it, with intention, one may obtain liberation from the lower demands of one's nature, and the better fulfil one's duty to life.

Now if the practice of the arts is truly to be credited with the beneficent influences that I have indicated (and

I know it is, both by personal experience and by observation of large-scale application of it abroad), it seems fairly obvious, in face of the appallingly inartistic condition of humanity today, that there is an urgent necessity for the bringing of a so potent and fundamental remedial means into the thought of those who are concerned with the planning of the post-war future. If any evidence is required as to the need of emphasis on the aesthetical necessity in life, we have it in the summarisation, in the Atlantic Charter, of the conditions deemed to be essential to the creation of a peaceful and prosperous world when the evil that is now disturbing it is extirpated. That official document has superseded the private and group speculation to which I have already referred, and has officially given a direction to the thought of the Allied Nations towards the future. Its august authors have indicated its flexible rough-and-readiness as a wartime expedient. Yet, since it is a habit of the human mind to settle down to conversation at the foot of signposts, and to regard trudging towards the horizon to which they point as being too much like work, it is the bounden duty of those who realise the aesthetical necessity, without disparagement of the tragically needed intentions of the Charter, to point out that, though it will bring an improvement in the physical conditions of humanity, and bring the contentment and assurance in which the finer things of the human mind may bud and blossom,



it has not dug down to the roots of the tree of life, and cannot gather its full fruitage.

Like its precursors, the Atlantic Charter ignores the central necessity of human nature, a necessity that is different from those for which it proposes to cater, yet, like them, exerts an influence on the others in the absence of which life cannot avoid demoralisation. For the realisation of this central necessity let us glance at the three other necessities already referred to, and at the transformation of the English triangle of pre-Charter anticipations into an American square—not the “square deific” of Walt Whitman the poet, but the square human of Franklin Roosevelt the politician. Prior to the Atlantic Charter, early in 1941, President Roosevelt, in his Annual Message to the Congress of the United States of America, spoke of Four Freedoms which the States would go to the utmost extremes to maintain, then for the people of the United States, later for others when Japan forced her into the war. The three aspects of the New World-Order widely canvassed in Britain were political, economical and religious. The Four Freedoms are Freedom of Speech, Freedom of Religion, Freedom from Want, Freedom from Fear. The last three Freedoms are the three unofficial aspects of the New World-Order stated in reverse ; Fear arising out of the maladjustment of the organisation of life, Want resulting from the carrying on of economics as legalised exploitation of one class of humanity by another, Religion as the

workaday localised term of what outside the churches and temples is called aspiration.

Now the organisational aspect of post-war reconstruction is, briefly generalised, an effort to find a way of life as collectively sensible as that of the hive, and individually above the manners and customs of the jungle; a way of life by which humanity may be able to live together as human beings. The economical aspect of post-war reconstruction is not directly concerned with the elevation of life: at its lowest it may leave humanity in the category of well-fed mammals; at its highest it may eliminate the unhealthy, stunted, deformed and unbeautiful features of humanity, and develop a sound body as a worthy and effective instrument of a sound mind. The religious aspect of the New World-Order seeks in effect, within the limitations of human understanding and expression, through doctrine and observance, to establish a dignified and beneficent relationship between the individual and the totality of life in which it is involved.

We may figure these three phases of life as operating in two directions; organisation and economics being concerned with the jostling group and the appetitive individual on the horizontal level; religion rising in the perpendicular direction. It is from the latter that we find the line towards the core of our subject, the aesthetical necessity in life. Elsewhere I have recalled the conviction expressed to me many years ago by the Irish poet AE that "there is no inspiration without as-

piration." I recall the epigram, not to make exposition of the psychological truth it puts into half a dozen words (the truth of perpetual double movement in life, progression and retrogression, to and fro, here and there, and, more to the point I have in mind, up and down), but to stand it on its head, and in that position (not uncomfortable for an epigram, it being a "poor rule that doesn't work both ways") to take it as a succinct statement of the thesis of these lectures. The epigram is, "There is no inspiration without aspiration." The reversal is, "There can be no aspiration without inspiration." In other words, there can be no real elevation of life, no ascent to individual eminence of spirit and action, without a complementary and equivalent descent of all that is meant by "the spirit" into the limitations of form that constitute the varieties of human expression. The original epigram of the poet was intended for artists: my reversal of it is presented to the Charter-makers of the future.

The question may be asked, Does not President Roosevelt's Freedom of Speech meet the deficiency of the New World-Order by providing the opportunity for the "expression" which we have seen to be essential for the elevation of the quality of life? It might be considered to do so if history showed any general tendency in humanity to see through things, instead of merely looking at them and occasionally, and under stress as in war time, a little beyond them. But there is no vision, save here and there in a few indivi-

duals who are dismissed as mystics, that sees the literature and art of the cosmos figuratively referred to in the phrase of the ancient Hebrew poet, "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork," with the corollary that, since humanity is within the cosmic totality, the declaration (which is the literature) and handiwork (which is the crafts) of humanity should also descend from the heavens of his aspiration, the firmament of his imagination. No. When President Roosevelt says "Freedom of Speech," he means plainly, without metaphysical embroidery, freedom to speak as one pleases, a freedom that, if it is not an empty catchword, obviously necessitates the repeal of the laws of libel and sedition by the United Nations. Yet such laws, however they may jar on those who are moved to give voice to their own idea of freedom as against the ideas of others, are, in a far-off and crude way, recognitions of an aesthetical necessity by which the incoherence of anger, or hatred, or ecstasy, or even of the frustrated passion for freedom, may be transmuted, through the limitations of art, into the order and power that convey illumination and conviction. When this happens, speech has become literature: not free speech; not, on the other hand, speech bound by external laws or ordinances; but speech enriched, intensified, deepened, uplifted by being self-subjected to the aesthetical disciplines inherent in itself; speech that clarifies the thought and ennobles the utterance of its speakers, and through them imparts clarity and nobility

to life. This is one aspect of the expression that is, I am convinced, essential to the growth and nourishment of human prosperity and whose omission, in unofficial speculation and official Freedoms and Charters, plants the seed of destruction among the roots of the tree of life.

I need not lay out details of the Atlantic Charter in order to expose its inadequacy in the face of the dreadful need of humanity for a vision and way of life above that of articulate bipeds. A summary of its eight clauses does all that is necessary: (1) territory, (2) territory, (3) forms of government, (4) economic materials and prosperity, (5) economic collaboration, (7) freedom from fear and want, (8) ultimate disarmament. The scenario for a moving picture of unarmed, fearless, prosperous individuals and groups, exchanging their commodities, voting (or not voting if they choose) in their various countries, has its essential and commendable features. It has even the rudiments of an "aesthetical phenomenon" in its recognition of substance (in land and natural products), of form (in the organisation of humanity), of rhythm (in economic exchange), of consciousness (in the lower phases of feeling such as fear). But the impulse behind its authorship is provoked by external necessity, by the fear of attack by other humans, and famine; not by "the Vision of the world and all the wonder that would be," or the allurements of the prosperity of the spirit and the spend-thrift imagination. And without these, without idealism in thought, and

aesthetical feeling and expression conveying the total high influences of art into life, there can be no true quality and living. How aesthetical feeling may be conveyed into life will be the burden of the next two lectures.



LECTURE II

THE INFLUENCE OF THE OBJECTIVE  
ARTS ON LIFE





LECTURE II  
THE INFLUENCE OF THE OBJECTIVE  
ARTS ON LIFE

In the first lecture of this series I admitted that that department of philosophy called aesthetics, which is devoted to the expression of the feelings through art with its accompaniment of beauty, was compelled by the extraordinary conditions of our time of world-war to submit itself to tests other than purely academical ones, tests of practicality and usefulness in the time of world-construction towards which events are now moving. With this in mind I indicated that the position of the arts and crafts, which are the media of aesthetical expression, in relation to the test differed radically from the position of other phases of life that had also to pass it, phases such as those that have been specially referred to in recent speculations towards the future under such titles as a "New World-Order," the "Four Freedoms," and the "Atlantic Charter." Shortly repeated, with some little variation, to lead up to the present lecture and the next, the difference is this.

The political, economical and religious expedients for the solving of problems made urgent by the war have been provoked into prominence by circumstances outside themselves; and in their application to the appal-

ling world-wide needs of humanity are liable to the instability and uncertainty that are inherent in all devices that do not spontaneously arise out of but are imposed upon human action. All history is but a dramatisation of this plain fact. Repetition has reduced it to a platitude. Inattention to the law of life behind the platitude has brought the world, through the accumulation and spread of external things, to its present penultimate ghastliness. The race is sick unto death. But its cure does not lie in bodily treatment that only suppresses symptoms: it lies in the extirpation of causes of the malady that vitiates the thought and feeling which are the covert springs of overt action.

In sharp contrast to the massages of politics, the plasters of economics, the pillules of dogma, is the internal remedy of creative activity, that is, activity that brings into existence objects that embody the medicament of unity in a whole, proportion and harmonious interaction between the parts of a whole, rhythmic vitality that generates health, sincerity in appearance that makes pretence and furtiveness impossible. These objects, however, are not themselves the curative agents in creative activity, though they have their curative influences for the spectator. Aesthetical health is itself the creation of the principles that are integral in the creative activity, and that, simultaneously with their external exercise, educe their beneficent counterparts within the emotional-cum-intellectual nature of the creator of works of vision and beauty and skill. Both aesthetical crea-

tion and appreciation are curative processes, but creative activity is primary and the more potent. Many years ago, when I gave a lecture on "Art as Medicine" in the Madras Medical College, the Chairman, Colonel (later General) Bradfield, in his concluding remarks said that apparently the lecturer wanted all doctors to become artists; to which I replied that, properly dealt with, all artists were already doctors. This is the post-war test of the practical value of art: it has been passed in the application of art-crafts to both the cure and prevention of emotional and mental disease by educators and physicians abroad who have awakened to the aesthetical necessity in life. This necessity, as I have shown in the first lecture, has been entirely ignored in the Atlantic Charter and its precursors. Hence the urgent necessity of emphasising the seriousness of this neglect in lectures such as these.

Having shown the necessity of the aesthetical element in life, the absence of which has led to its present inaesthetical climax; and having shown the absence of realisation of the aesthetical necessity in speculations towards the future betterment of human conditions (not to mention human character), which absence is a sure prophecy of the non-success of inadequate remedies for the human malady; I shall now proceed to indicate certain characteristics and qualities of the major arts and crafts, and the beneficent influences which these can, if allowed, exert on humanity, and through humanity can exert on organised life.

I have already pointed out, in the first lecture, the grouping of immobile and mobile arts. For a change of terms I shall call the same groups objective and subjective. The terms tangible and intangible would serve equally well as indicators, though objective and subjective suggest the ultimate fact that all things, as far as humanity is concerned, exist in and are evaluated by the mind. These terms, like immobile and mobile, being applied to things and processes in a state of existence in which nothing is absolute, all is relative, can have no absolute connotation. Things objective and subjective exist through one another. For purposes of reference we bring together certain products of an activity that we recognise as creative, and group them as objective and subjective according to the predominance in them of the material or immaterial characteristics that one need not be a philosopher to identify in architecture as distinct from music, though architecture has been described as frozen music, and music has in it a quality of construction referred to as its architecture. What we shall term the objective arts are: architecture, sculpture, carving, painting. There are others, but these will serve our purpose.

The most inclusive of the objective arts is architecture, since it may be both the background of the objective arts of sculpture, carving and painting, and the auditorium of the subjective arts of drama, poetry, music and dance. A single mind may have conceived a piece of architecture, as Giotto conceived the tower in Florence, with which his name will be associated as

long as the memory of great achievement lasts; but it took the hands of many workmen to give tangible form to the artist's intangible idea. A piece of architecture seen thus is the supreme embodiment of both the individual and collective aspects of life; a compendious symbol of the House of Life to the construction of which humanity is being compelled by tragic circumstances to address itself with an architectural inclusiveness beyond any of the social structures of the past, a new structure for individual and collective shelter, hospitality, enjoyment, aspiration.

The origins of architecture are as homely and intimate as the origins of the other arts. They began (as far as research can judge, for there is little sure record of that remote time) in the necessity for protection from weather and enemies and for seclusion for carrying on the domestic functions of life. But there came a time when some obscure impulse, not wholly concerned with food and progeny, moved within the rudimentary imagination of a cave-dweller; and behold! not merely a crude representation of something in the immediate surroundings of primitive man (a deer or a weapon that museums now treasure and archæologists lecture on), but a way of escape across frontiers of limitation, a response to a call from a larger life than the personal, a dark prophecy of "arts, though unimagined, yet to be." With the discovery of representation came the discovery of form, the magical transformation of a severely useful more or less straight line into a series

of ups-and-downs that crowned one's doorway with reminders of the everlasting hills—and crude excavation and building passed on from simple function, through the expansion of suggestive ornament, to the infancy of architecture.

We need not follow the development of architecture here, tempting though it be. I shall only emphasise, as a step in our subject, the aesthetical fact that from the simplest beginning of architecture to its most sophisticated and elaborate development, one impulse of expansion waxes and wanes; waxes as the tegument of the imagination in a particular human group and time responds to the pressure and call of the creative life of the universe, as the Greeks of old responded, and gave to the history of art the beautiful variations in earthly substance of the ideal edifice of life, the "house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens;" wanes when the imagination thickens beyond the ability to respond to "the desire of the moth for the star," and the face of the earth, as in India today, becomes clouded and blotched with excrescences and eruptions of aesthetical debility. Yet, such symptoms of aesthetical disease as today disfigure the fair countenance of India in ugly and incongruous buildings are not wholly moribund: they are signs of aesthetical life seeking to assert itself through the frustrations of degraded taste, commercial ignorance, personal pretentiousness. It is for those who are aesthetically awake (a small minority in India today owing to the ignoring of the aesthetical element

in education) to utter their protest against the debasing of architecture, with its subtle influence for evil on the taste of the people; and not in India only, but wherever the caricatures of architecture, that are symptoms of the western malaise, have arisen and spread their inaesthetical influence.

Bearing in mind the fundamental impulse to expansion from the confined to the unconfined, from here to beyond, it is seen as aesthetically right that the great achievements of the architectural instinct in humanity should find their highest expression in edifices devoted to religion. For, however the devotees of one faith may disparage those of another (Robert Bridges chanted of "Buddha's vain pagodas"), from the aesthetical point of view they stand as embodiments of the aspirational and inspirational directions in the movement of human life. Their spires are, in the up-stretching Gothic style, evocations of the spirit of man towards the larger life. The Dravidian gopurams are glyphs of invocation of the spirit of the universe in the personifications of super-human powers that they bear, and of evocation in the awakening of the spirit of ascension in the devotee who sees in them ways towards the celestial from the terrestrial. In the simple purity of the architectures of Islam the fingers of the imagination reach upwards towards the universal being in its minarets, and figure the "peace past understanding" in the repose of its domes, whose fascinating balance of outgoing convexity and receiving concavity began, as scholars say, in the hemispherical



dagoba of Buddhist architecture, and culminated, according to the expert, Lethaby, in the most beautiful single architectural form that humanity has created, the Taj Mahal dome.

In these imaginative emblems of the interrelationship of the finite and the infinite, the mind that has had the opportunity of realising their aesthetical constituent finds a delight unqualified by their theological and intellectual contents. It sees in them not statements of what each faith regards as its final and universally obligatory revelation of truth, but varied and mutually illuminating versions in substance of a reality that transcends all forms of expression of it, that cannot be limited by any one of them, yet informs them all with a delighted bewilderment. And this is one of the aesthetical controls that architecture can exert on life, when education, in which the aesthetical element in human nature has its rightful place, has reared generations of men and women who not only thrill to the beauties that architecture holds up to the understanding eye, but who hear the voice of its "frozen music" with its burden of aesthetical broad-mindedness and toleration and interpret it into the hoary maxim of Homer: "There is much to be said everywhere on both sides."

It may be some vague sense of aesthetical sin in different styles of architecture, created by different faiths, that here and there in India has led to combined styles. At the same time, such combinations may be a sign of aesthetical grace, an intuition anticipating a desirable

unity; not a unit, for any attempt to make a single form or motif universal in architecture, as in anything else, is a heresy against the law of life. We find such combinations (to refer to just three examples that come to my mind from direct observation) in the Lotus Mahal at Vijayanagar, in which remnants of Hindu pillars and "Saracenic" windows make what must have been a perfect architectural fraternity; in more elaborate buildings in Ahmedabad, where the two cultures met and mingled in art; and in Mandi City, on the way to the Punjab Himalayas, where the Pathan drip-stone spreads protectingly over pierced carvings of Gandharvas and is looked on by Shiva's Nandi.

Whether such fusion of historical styles in India has a future or not is a secret of the Muse of Architecture. It is conceivable that a genius might arise who would create a unity that would be entirely satisfactory to an aesthetically cultured visitor from Mars who was ignorant of the hairs that humans split in order to belabour each other with a chosen half that each declares to be better than the other. And while this possibility discloses itself, another may be doing so; the possibility that the growth of architectural appreciation may ultimately create a style out of the aesthetical principles that I have indicated above, incorporating the influences that form and rhythm subtly exert on the human consciousness, yet reflecting the differences and varieties that arise out of racial temperament and physique, traditional cultures, available materials, and seasonal variations;

differences and varieties that constitute the beautiful things through which the seeing eye can glimpse "the Beauty of all beauty."

The study of the ascensive direction in the history of architecture, from the plain utilitarian function of shelter to the efflorescence of idea and feeling through which the process of building transformed itself into the art of architecture, is an exercise in aesthetical optimism concerning the future of the human race, with some correctives to preserve balance in hollows of decline between crests of achievement. We are in such an architectural hollow today, when what is referred to as originality sedulously avoids aesthetical origins, and vagaries and peculiarities are as unrelated to architectural character as temporary stylishness is to the permanent quality of style.

While the future of architecture makes up its mind as to itself (and no aesthetical criticism will allure or sting it into doing so), the war-test of the value of architecture to life applies to it, as to everything else, and particularly in the vast areas of the west that have been devastated by the war, and will be still more so before it ends. The need is both urban and rural: bombed cities and burnt villages have shared equally in the dishonours of warfare in its modern developments. Homeless populations will have to be housed again. Movements in this direction have begun, and these, the aesthetically-minded will earnestly hope, will be purged of the inartistic infection of the jerry builder to whom building was only

an expedient of money-making and the spirit of architecture was unknown. Garden cities in England, community homes in Amsterdam and Hamburg, sky-scraper apartments in New York and Chicago, with all of which I have been acquainted or familiar, are steps towards collective housing with a recognition of a growing need of natural and artistic beauty. With the homes of the repatriated people will be associated their schools, markets, community halls and other public buildings; and into these the spirit of beauty will, it is to be hoped, find a welcome. Architecture was born in the prehistoric home; it ascended and extended, never wholly away from its born purpose, always in some degree "true to the kindred points of heaven and home". The aesthetical necessity in life asks that it return, to the homes of the new era, not as a "prodigal son," but with the prodigality of beauty from whose spending will come the incalculable riches of the imagination. Such prodigality of the beauty of the imagination does not necessarily mean elaborateness of design or decoration. There can be a beauty of elaborateness, of course, as there can be a beauty of simplicity. The expression and appreciation of either cannot be "mugged up" from text-books, even with coloured plates: they come out of intelligent observation, and the means to such observation is the provision of architectural beauty in the familiar surroundings of life. The test of architectural intelligence is to be able to appreciate the subtle difference (if it is a difference) between elaborate simplicity and simple elaborateness.

The need of the return home of architecture is as great in India as elsewhere, though not for the same reason. The attentions of warfare have not yet laid inartistic hands on her cities or her countryside, and please God never will. But other forces, not less powerful than war or ultimately certain, if not so audible or visible in their immediate operation, have played the Devil's sappers and miners so well in the hidden places of her aesthetical life that the vast masses of her people have been brought down to an innocent degradation, and her educated classes to a sophisticated degradation so deep that it takes a pride in itself. The cure for false pride is true pride, not humility; pride in the high accomplishments of the past, and pride in vision and will to translate the qualities of those accomplishments into the familiar and necessary things of life. Unintelligent yieldings to the blandishments of commercialised vulgarity and stupidity, deference to influences alien to their own tradition and genius, with the unnatural sequel of dull mechanical imitation; these are the inimical forces of cultural debasement and disintegration against which have to be ranged the aesthetical forces of disinterested idealism, indigenous inspiration and traditional skill working with new materials and within developed circumstances, with their natural sequel of creative initiative and all the joy of individual expression and collective appreciation and uplift that is involved in it.

From architecture we turn to the other objective arts of sculpture and carving. In front of them, as of

architecture, is the purpose of creating an artistic unity : but the materials of architecture are scattered and unrelated, and those of sculpture and carving are single and in excess of the artistic need ; and this difference between materials and purpose sets up a difference in the method by which the purpose is achieved. Architecture draws to itself what it needs in order to demarcate a portion of space within whose vast impersonality some phase of human personality may be realised and asserted. Sculpture and carving chip and cut away that which is superfluous to the desired end of recreating a substantial embodiment of an unsubstantial apprehension of beauty in form ; or a relatively lasting reminder of human eminence whose "outward and visible sign" was rendered back to the elements as long ago as the original of the Socratic head in an Italian gallery that immortalises a snub nose, or as recently as the statue of Annie Besant on the Beach Road at Madras that for centuries will tell that even in her time (which happens also to be ours) the phrase "the weaker sex" had become a poor joke.

The history of sculpture presents an interesting bifurcation between the tendency to express the idealistic and the realistic aspects of life within the general impulse to art-creation. There are those who by temperament respond acutely and without intellectual hesitation to what William James, the American philosopher, called "the total push and pressure of the Cosmos," what others call God or the Gods, and AE called the Earth Mother whose "meanest sod," he sang,

Is thrilled with fires of hidden day,  
And haunted by all mystery.

Those who create through this temperamental response of the finite to what they feel to be the infinite are the idealists and mystics of the arts. And because of the pervading presence in their works of "the little more—and how much it is!" they are the artists who become the themes of art-exposition from generation to generation. There are others to whom "a primrose by a river's brim" is only a primrose, to whom the mental image, by which the craftsman must willy-nilly guide his hand, must temperamentally correspond to what he regards as reality. Their eyes are focussed on the surfaces of things with intent to represent things seen; to represent, even to re-present, to show things in a "new light;" but not to interpret: their light is the reflected light of observation, not the illumination from the light of the spirit.

Now while these are the greater and the lesser lights, the sun and moon, so to speak, of the æsthetical firmament, they are equally essential in the scheme of things, and are not to be thought of as opposed in office or value. In the fulfilment of our function as artists (and we are all artists at least *in potentia*) we may be as idealistic or as realistic as we please, and as our birthright allows; but philosophically both must have our thought, for, indeed, there can be no idealism completely removed from the actualities that are called reality, and there can

be no realism that does not recognise the intangibilities that hold things tangible together. They are as inevitable as the diastolic and systolic pulsations of the living heart, the expansion that draws life to itself, the contraction that sends it forth; aspiration (to repeat a poet) followed by inspiration, inspiration leading to aspiration.

These main characteristics of idealism and realism in art (and we are now thinking of sculpture), seen in the works of individual artists, are also seen collectively in races and eras. In the great days of Grecian sculpture they coalesced in the representation of idealistic conceptions of divine personality carried by consummate skill to refined imaginations of realistic human form. The Hindu genius expressed its conceptions of deity in a different manner. Something inherent in it responded to life not only as that "in which we live and move and have our being," but that at the same time lives and moves and has its being in us, and in creeping and flying and swimming creatures, in trees and flowers, in wind and flame. In these embodiments of supermundane and superhuman aspects of the Universal Life, formal beauty was not less active than in those of the Greeks; but a more elaborate metaphysic, from which the Hindu artists drew their inspiration, made a subtle modification in the character of the plastic beauty, reducing it below the classical aesthetic quality, but raising it to a higher degree of intellectual significance. The Greek imagination, in its objective representation of the Pantheon, "drew an angel down." In the descent, something of



angelhood was discarded in order to fit the conception into the form. At the same time, the form responded aesthetically to the dignity that the imagination conferred upon it, but preserved its human-formal integrity. The Hindu imagination, seeking also to express the superhuman through the human, but to express it with less deprivation of its superhumanity, looked on the human form as an accessory to its ideal, not as an insurmountable barricade. It counted the expression of the cosmic life more essential than the maintenance of the integrity of form, and by passing beyond anatomical imitations "raised a mortal," if not "to the skies," at least a considerable distance in that direction.

Along these two lines of art-creation there was given to the world a double gift of unreckonable value in meeting the aesthetical necessity in life. A Greek statue (even a fragment of one, for the perfection aimed at was in every inch of the expression) was not only a glyph of superhuman life, but an incitement towards the attainment of a conceivable perfection of human beauty and health. If man can not reach the Olympian quality of the Gods and Goddesses, he might at least try to live up to the sculptures that he has created, is the challenge (not always or even frequently conscious as it was in George Grey Barnard, the American sculptor) of every artist to his and her day and generation. The expectant mothers of Greece accepted it and looked on the statues of the celestials in public places with the desire that their offspring might through them incarnate something of

godlike quality. We might all very well do the same, men as well as women ; for are we not all in some degree expectant mothers, trying to bring to birth some new idea or desire or ambition ? In a World-Order in which the aesthetical necessity was given the place that it must have if there is to be an order of human relationship and conduct that is at once stable and resilient, some glimmer of municipal or provincial intelligence as to aesthetical eugenics would set a statue in every city square and at every country cross-roads, where, in addition to the perpetual silent impartation of character and eminence, viewing the statues would be as universal an observance, established and made obligatory by delight, as viewing the delicate cherry blossoms in spring and the gorgeous maple leaves in autumn was, and I trust still is, in Japan.

While Grecian statuary accentuated an attainable beauty of human form, Hindu statuary moved from "the things which are seen," and therefore temporal, to "the things which are unseen," and, therefore, relatively eternal; to extensions of human capacities, figured in multiple limbs and in ornaments and implements. Both aspects of life, appearance and power, are necessary in any World-Order that can last beyond the double menace of ugliness and weakness. The use of sculpture as a means to their attainment has, however, a double blockage to which aesthetics must address itself if it is to pass the pragmatic test that post-war necessity is applying to everything.

The aesthetical potency of the classical and oriental sculptures in our time is blocked by two misconceptions ; one, that the Gods and Goddesses of Greece are out of date ; the other, that the Gods and Goddesses of Hindu India (not to mention those of Buddhist Tibet, Shinto Japan, Central America and elsewhere) have no universal validity. This may be held to be so, or not, looked at from different cardinal points of the theological compass. Psychologically and aesthetically it misses the point. An Indian artist once said in my hearing that all talk of ancient and modern in art was false ; that as soon as he thought of anything, no matter what its age was, it was modern. Now that, to my mind, is psychology in miniature, the pith of the subjective law of life that, apart from the inferred existence of anything, nothing can have reality to a human being save as a mental "object," and to such an immediate mental object no age can be attributed. But it has to be remembered that the plastic or graphic images of superhumanity in the arts of the polytheistic religions were not presented as living likenesses : they stood for powers and qualities that were invisible as the wind and intangible as light. And as these had no positive images in form and substance, they were expressed through figurative algebra, such as, wings-at-heels plus Hermes equal speed, and, waving-arms-and-legs plus Nataraja equal rhythm. And neither speed nor rhythm is the creation of Henry Ford or Anna Pavlova, of Uday Shanker or Rukmini Arundale : they are not temporalities but (to coin a word) eternalities ; and

that which invokes them in form, and through the form invokes them in the creator and the appreciator, is not confined to place or time, but is eternally up to date. That which, on the other hand, binds itself to the contemporaneous, makes alliance with the transient. Of those artists who think that, by expressing today, they will pass it on to tomorrow, AE wrote :

.....They do not know that time  
 Forgets its hours, its days, its years, and all  
 But that which has some touch of the timeless  
 on it.

The psychology of theological sculpture indicated above disposes of the chronological misconception regarding the appreciation of sculpture—or any of the arts. The pragmatic force of the matter, particularly in regard to sculpture which we are at the moment considering, passes over from psychology to aesthetics which, to the questions of science and philosophy as to how things work and why they work so and not otherwise, adds its enquiry, What is the influence of the arts, and just now of sculpture, on the human sensorium, in individual quality and collective behaviour, and, as far as can be judged, on the reconstruction of human relations and conditions after the war?

The urgency of the question comes to us in the press as these lines are being written (January 17, 1944), with a nightmarish vision of the possibilities inherent in the Atlantic Charter's incomplete conception of

humanity as a mere territorial and trading animal, a vision that is far away from the central necessity of the world malady, the necessity of bringing the aesthetical nature of humanity into human affairs. Those who read the newspapers with an eye on indications towards the future will have noted the dreadful menace in the attitude of Poland and Russia to one another in regard to post-war frontiers between them. They will also have noted the bared claws and teeth of unregenerate greed and unresponsiveness to the finer things of life, in the thinly veiled animosity of commercial interests of Britain and America. In front of such threats to the future (which it is to be hoped will pass), the warning of so apparently academical and remote a matter as aesthetics must, indeed, sound thin and weak ; yet its burden may be the ancient call to preparation of the way of the Ideal, the "still, small voice" that has within it an ultimately greater power of regeneration than the whirlwind or the thunder.

The answer to the aesthetical question as to the influence of the Grecian and Hindu types of sculptures on humanity has been partly anticipated by the reminder that, apart from the religious use of images, the Grecian indicated a raising of the quality of human beauty, and the Hindu the extension of human power and knowledge.

It is not necessary here to go into a detailed exposition of the nature of beauty, either as it was thought of by the Grecian philosophers or by their successors, in order to realise the aesthetical usefulness of the Grecian

sculptures or those later that, like them, maintained the integrity of the human form. Any one of the sculptures is itself an epitome of the essentials of beauty; in the whole, unity; in details, balance; in appearance, grace; in deportment, dignity. In the admixture of these, to represent various functions at their imagined highest (law by Zeus, culture by Apollo, wisdom by Pallas Athene, love by Venus), there are differences of proportion and appearance, but never beyond or excluding the essentials.

The Grecian Gods and Goddesses (notwithstanding the criticism of their out-of-dateness) are eternally contemporaneous by virtue of undatable qualities translated by the imagination and skill of the artists into sculpture. This applies also to place; but we shall refer to this aspect of the matter more particularly in connection with Hindu sculpture. Here also aesthetics asks no questions as to theological doctrine or sectarian claims. Its concern is with the creative intention, and with the influences that the artistic embodiment of that intention can, if undiverted by preconceptions and misconceptions in the beholder, exert on the individual in heightened sensibility, and through the individual on the community in better organisation and nobler conduct. The domination of the occidental imagination for two thousand years by the Grecian integrity of the human form has created an obvious and natural barrier against immediate western appreciation of classical Hindu sculpture with its departure from normal anatomy. But the post-war question as to the possible influence of Hindu

sculpture as an aesthetical factor in the complex psychology of the future is not likely to waste much patience on even a two-thousand year-old prejudice against its universal validity, particularly as the more acute and free mind of the future is not likely to miss the fact that the prejudice itself is not completely consistent. For of the millions of Christendom who draw solace in times of sorrow or menace from the superbly imaginative and aesthetically potent assertion of an oriental scripture, "underneath and around are the everlasting arms," there are very few who would not show repugnance to the two arms of the four of Nataraja that say much the same thing in stone or bronze. The inconsistency of the prejudice will come home vividly to anyone who tries to make a figure whose arms are underneath something, and at the same time around it. Both are expressions of the same idea. But the anatomical monstrosity that the objectively anthropomorphic imagination of the west sees in the semi-anthropomorphic Hindu image is no more monstrous than the other, which is only less obviously so through being expressed in the gesturing wizardry of words instead of the immobile solidity of stone. In both instances the art of the expression is figurative; and being so, it has the right of currency in the whole sphere of aesthetical life. The post-war aesthetical test of Hindu sculpture will not be its religious use (no Hindu image, in fact, has any invocative potency unless it is in consecrated use in a place of worship), but in the serviceability

to humanity of the ideas and qualities that it invokes.

By dissociating aesthetics from the theological aspect of sculpture, I do not suggest that it is irreligious. On the contrary, I feel that the pragmatistical aesthetical test will be applied also to religion, with some drastic results; and that aesthetical expression in the arts and crafts will respond, with equally drastic results, to the influences of a religion which, in the variety and diversity of intellectual interpretation and emotional and liturgical reaction to it will make a revelation of religious experience far beyond what is at present so called. Meanwhile aesthetics takes cognizance of the special potency of the objective image. In Christian terminology (or rather its English translation), "In the beginning was the Word;" but in order to fulfil its intention, "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." So in Hindu iconography, the creative word, usually called Om, was embodied in the Goddess Pranava; and in aesthetics, the subjective must remain outside apprehension and appreciation unless it take an objective form. No one, however religious in temperament, can worship with any degree of warmth the cube root of twentyseven. But put it into "God in three persons" in Rome or Canterbury, or into the Trimurti in Kashi or Kanchi, and humanity will give its cordial devotion to it; and find in it a means for the fabrication of objective error out of subjective truth, and of groping by it back to truth through error.



I have referred above to the characteristic of Hindu sculpture as the extension of human power and knowledge. It need hardly be said that there is no suggestion here either that the celestials only differ from the terrestrials in the number of their heads or arms, or that the extension of human power must be by multiplicity. The multiple heads of Brahma or Shiva or Subramaniam or Ravana are (as I have already called other features of Hindu sculpture) figurative algebra, through the substantial limitations of which the unsubstantial and unlimited realities of the realm of consciousness are indicated. So also are the multiple arms of Saraswati indicative of the dispensation of high delight through the subtle art of music; and those of Durga prophetic of the overcoming of the demon of *tamas* (inertia) by the many weapons of *rajasa* (action). Expansion and exaltation of consciousness (of light in darkness), extension and intensification of action (of right against wrong), accumulation and distillation of cultural wealth (of spiritual, not sensuous pleasure); these and others that I cannot here detail are aesthetical virtues expressed in Hindu sculpture; that belong to no place or time; that belong to all places and times; and are cardinal in their demands on the attention of the future as aesthetical aids to a wiser world-order, without relation to their ritualistic uses.

A brief suggestion is all I can give here on the knowledge aspect of Hindu sculpture. A wide area of psycho-biological research has been opened up in recent years regarding the relationship between the flute of

Krishna and the cerebro-spinal system of the human body. The drum in one of Nataraja's right hands, and the flame in one of the left, are not mere ornaments ; they are iconographical symbols of universal realities. One gives out the rhythm to which the dance of existence moves through change (usually called destruction) to renewed design in the working out of the theme of the Cosmic Artist—the fugue of the Master Musician, the sonnet of the Master Poet, as Sir James Jeans paraphrased it in his book, "The Mysterious Universe." Every child who can turn the knob of the family radio knows it now as wave-lengths. The other symbolises the cosmic energy so intermixed with the stuff of the universe that, when evoked by intensity or friction, it will spring into life at every degree from the illumination of the sage or the coruscation of genius, down through the lightning between monsoon clouds, to the spark struck by the shod heel out of the stony pavement. The Hindu iconographical genius personalised it as Agni. The impersonal modern mind calls it universal radio activity. There are other matters of knowledge, such as the anticipations of aeronautics, but the foregoing will have to suffice.

The sculpture of pure Buddhism (as distinguished from its Tibetan and Far Eastern mixtures and variants in the arts) differs from Hindu and Grecian sculpture in that it centres round a single person, and, instead of seeking to express perfections of human form and appearance or extensions of power, has given to the world an incal-

culable number of images of a being who, in human form, attained complete command over its mental, emotional and physical instruments. This pre-occupation with a single figure and aspect of expression, while it did not encourage symbolical or aesthetical variety, has given what Sir William Rothenstein has called one of the supreme gifts of the Indian genius to plastic art in the most perfect figure of repose. Such a type is of high aesthetical importance in the influence of calm that it can shed on the rush and disorder of our crazy time, and infuse into the thought and feeling and action of the future.

The art that arose out of the occidental and semi-occidental genius under the oriental inspiration of the story and teaching of Jesus Christ has had much the same personal and expressional limitation as that of pure Buddhism. There is, however, the difference that Christian iconography, in its representation of one who was at once Son of Man and Son of God, has given specific expression to the conception of the ideal unity of the divine and the human. But, unlike the Grecian expression of beauty of form and the Hindu versatility of symbolical expression, also unlike the Buddhist figuration of placid repose, Christian art has laid emphasis on the aspect of the Man of Sorrows, and in this has made a deep impression on the western mind, which is more responsive to aesthetical sentiment than to aesthetical symbolism. The personification of love and sacrifice (apart from doctrinal claims, need I say again?) is an aesthetical influence of the highest value for the future.

Javanese sculpture created something like a parallel of the Christian unity of divine and human by perpetuating the memory of deceased kings in statues presenting them in the traditional attitude and garb of the object of their devotion, one as Shiva, another as the Buddha ; a conception of high aesthetical potency in its suggestion of the possible elevation of the human being to union with its celestial ideal, covering the whole range of outer and inner qualities from lowest to highest with their effects on both individual and collective life.

Diametrically opposite to the sculptural representation of conceptions of divine beings (anthropomorphic in form in the Grecian and pure Buddhist, semi-anthropomorphic in the Hindu type) is the prohibition of figures of persons in the art of Islam. Yet this limitation of the subject matter of expression in plastic form has had, for compensation, a development of decorative exquisiteness whose aesthetical influence tends to draw out an acute response of the finest apprehension of impersonal beauty of design associated with chaste and reserved beauty of architectural form. Such a sense of chastity and reserve is most urgently needed the world over, but particularly in India, where a combination of alien and indigenous influences is causing, through inartistic and unidealistic entertainment and literature, not only a negative debasement of mentality and taste, but a positive desire for the vulgar and impure, that is one of the most evil menaces to the quality and conduct of the future.

As a means of aesthetical influence, painting is of special value because of the general accessibility and movability of its materials, and the variety of expression that it allows. This makes it of importance in school education, in which the encouragement of the inherent pleasure in the representation of things by the young should pave the way to the appreciation of aesthetical qualities.

The general aesthetical principles which I have spoken of in connection with the other objective arts, architecture and sculpture, apply not only to the related arts of metal-casting in wood and other substances, but also to painting. On the side of "aesthetical morality" I shall do no more than refer, as I have already done, to the ancient Indian teaching of the use of appropriate pictures as means for the development of desired virtues through which one may obtain individual release from the demands of the lower nature, and so become a better citizen. This is the gist of these lectures as it applies to art-appreciation as an essential means for the encouragement of a new world order : but it is only half the gist, and the lesser half beside the regenerative power of art-participation, as I have already indicated and will again refer to.

In addition to the specifically qualitative aspects of the aesthetical influence of painting, which it shares with the other arts, there is another aspect that, within recent years, has become an accepted and fully tested agent of what is technically called *therapeusis* and *prophylaxis*,

that is the cure and prevention of certain diseased conditions. Twenty years ago, when I began to give systematic attention to the relationship of art and health, I had acquired some experience of the natural restraint that energetic exercise with music had on the passionate impulse in boys, and of the quiet mental and emotional stimulus exercised by circles and curves in decoration in contrast to the cramping influence of squares and triangles. I had also noted my own reaction to different colours. But my data were few and my attitude personally speculative. Years later than my lecture on "Art as Medicine" to the Madras Medical College, in a round-the-world tour, carrying the artistic gifts of India in a collection of mainly modern paintings, I received in return an education in what was being developed, particularly in Holland and the United States, in the application of the influence of the various ingredients of the arts to disease. These included the making of things of use and ornament in woods and clays. To the satisfaction of producing articles that brought commendation for design, proportion, texture, and other phases of skill and beauty, there was added the further satisfaction of earning money for articles sold. From this appeal to the idealistic and practical sides of life there came an influence that made a remarkable change in the criminal records of a large city. Boys of the underworld, incipient gangsters by parentage and upbringing, were transformed into responsible and useful citizens of a vast city.

In the art-cure of social disease painting (led up to by drawing) was a specially valuable ingredient. In another great city a large building in a back-street district had, when I visited it in 1929, hundreds of students of painting drawn from unpromising aesthetical surroundings, boys and girls who might have taken the turning to vice, but through the happiness that comes from the release of the creative impulse in art, were on the high road to the good life in the wake of those who had preceded them into fine citizenship, not necessarily as painters for a living.

Later I read in newspapers from America of an exhibition of paintings by doctors and their patients, a result of the realisation by the profession that concentration on artistic work had a highly beneficial influence on functional disorders that were largely the result of worry or nervous irritation, or want of purposeful occupation or emotional release.

But there is a phase of painting to which, as a conclusion to this far from complete indication of the influence that can be exerted on life through the arts, I shall make a summary reference. The effect of colour on the sensorium has been observed with scientific particularity during the past thirty years, and is now an established and thoroughly attested agent in therapeutic procedure, though not yet to any extent among orthodox physicians. I first came upon "colour therapy" in a large clinic in Holland in 1928, and saw the application of various light-vibrations to cases of mental and neural

disorder. The method of treatment is, very briefly, this: From left to right of the spectrum, that is, from violet to red, there is a gradation of influence, physically from cool to warm, mentally from repose to stimulation. A feverish patient is put in a blue-coloured room in which quietness is induced. A case of morbid depression arising from faulty circulation is put in a red room; a case of mental depression in a yellow room. From rudiments such as these, an elaborate method of treatment by shades and alternations has been developed. The point of aesthetical importance in this is the possibility of using colour for appropriate influences on human sensibility; such as the using of the quieter colours in a sleeping-room, or the gently stimulating colours in a living or study-room. Thus, and in many other ways that I need not recount here, human responsiveness to aesthetical influences would be increased, with a corresponding response of efficiency and pleasure. This is a matter that not only concerns physicians but also artists. When a knowledge of the mental and physical effects of colours becomes as general as the knowledge of vitamins or bacteria, there will come into painting a changed tone and temperament, and with it a manageable influence on the aesthetical nature of humanity.





LECTURE III

THE INFLUENCE OF THE SUBJECTIVE  
ARTS ON LIFE



### LECTURE III

## THE INFLUENCE OF THE SUBJECTIVE ARTS ON LIFE

Our enquiry is directed towards ascertaining the characteristics and qualities inherent in the arts and crafts that may, in both their creation and appreciation, exert influences on human thought, feeling and action such as the post-war mind will regard as worth while. This would appear to be imposing on the artistic creative activity of humanity an extraneous, artificial and irrelevant control, to which aesthetical philosophy should give no countenance. It happens, however, that the pragmatistical test of everything including aesthetics that the war is provoking in certain of the forward-looking minds of the time does not strike the aesthetically endowed mind as a restriction. It strikes it rather as an opportune expedient of the Time Spirit for making a sanctioned occasion for asserting that the workability and usefulness test has no meaning as far as aesthetics is concerned, seeing that it has within itself, in the creative activities that are the media of aesthetical expression, just those principles of life that are needed for the bringing about of not merely a new but a true World-Order.

In the pursuit of aesthetical characteristics and qualities in the arts and crafts calculated to meet the searching tests of the future as to serviceability I have divided the main arts into objective and subjective groups. I have done so, mainly for convenience of reference, because the objective group (architecture, sculpture, carving and painting) has as its predominant feature the element of stability which is one of the essential conditions of responsible and orderly life and the subjective group (drama, dance, music and poetry) has as its predominant feature the element of fluidity which is an equally essential condition of life that can only fulfil itself in expansions and contractions, in the renaissance that is the artistic response to the spirit of spring, and in the autumnal witherings of eras of decadence. I might, of course, have arranged the subjects otherwise both in the grouping and in the order within the groups. I might even have followed the advice of the sixteenth century French essayist Montaigne: "Among the liberal arts let us begin with the art that gives us liberty. They are all, indeed, of some service in instructing us in the right conduct of our life, as all other things do in some sort. But let us choose that which directly and professedly serves that end." By the art that gives us liberty the essayist refers to whichever of the arts is in most intimate affinity with our individual temperament and ability, and is, therefore, our natural and most efficient means of liberating our ideas into satisfying expression. By the term "liberal arts" he put a restriction on the subs-

tantive "arts" that then prevailed and prevails even now. The instruction in the right conduct of our life was, and is, attributed to the so-called liberal but frequently conservative arts that are expressed in speech. But the broadening of man's mind in the four post-renaissance centuries since Montaigne's time, if it has not added many cubits unto his spiritual stature, as the present condition of human affairs would seem to indicate, has added to the girth within which he has gathered not only the accumulations of material substance but the meanings that have grown around many words that, being verbal rolling-stones, have gathered a good deal of the moss of usage. Those today who realise the necessity of the infusion of the aesthetical spirit through all phases of life, and simultaneously realise the potent influence of the creative arts and crafts that only awaits the opportunity to be given it to take up its regenerative work, are no longer content to have the "liberal arts" confined mainly to derivative study of other people's notions of things through the unsteady and seldom fully informed medium of the intellect. They claim for the arts and artcrafts an integral place with the others in education, from which place they may instruct the makers of a stable future beyond the post-war future in "the right conduct of our life." This the arts and crafts will do with the *directness* that Montaigne so long ago stipulated as one of the conditions that should govern out choice of an art; for every detail of artistic activity

is a step towards the discovery of the way of creative life, and this is the central need of the future. The maker of objects of art is simultaneously a self-maker, not after the secondary caricatures of man but after the original "image and likeness of God." But Montaigne's other condition, that the chosen art should *professedly* serve the end of instructing us in the right conduct of life, is the reverse of the instructive capacity of the arts and art-crafts. It belongs to the arrogance of the intellect, not to the unconscious benevolence of the imagination. The secret of the effectiveness of the arts and crafts as instructors in the right conduct of life is that their instruction is unimposed, spontaneous, unemphatic; its allurements and disciplines are natural, inherent, accepted conditions of the *ananda* (bliss) of artistic creation. It is true, as Montaigne says, that all other things in some sort are of service in instructing us in the conduct of life; but the distinction of aesthetical didacticism is that it is never not instructive, and its instruction is never professedly didactic.

This is a more or less dogmatic restatement with a difference of the thesis of these lectures; not wholly dogmatic, for I indicated in the previous lecture the aesthetical characteristics and qualities inherent in the objective arts of architecture, sculpture, carving and painting that make at least a half demonstration of the manner in which creative art can influence the creation of a future world-order—*must* have full opportunity to influence it if the world-order is to be at once steady, pliable, unified

proportionate, harmonious, in a word, artistic. I turn now to a similar indication regarding the subjective arts of drama, dance, music and poetry as the other half of the demonstration. And here I would say that my references to the octave of major arts do not carry the inference that I have a working knowledge of them all, or that such knowledge is essential to one who expounds them or to those who listen to the exposition. It is a simple law of life, and of the arts as phases of life, that what is fundamental in one is fundamental in all. There is an obvious difference to the eye between the building of a cathedral and the painting of an ivory miniature, and to the ear between the construction of Beethoven's Choral Symphony and a kirthanam of Thiagaraja. But the difference is in the details of expression; in the conditions imposed by materials and implements, by the inlaid silver on metal or the drawn bow; in the simple difference of artistic solidity and slow or rapid motion and the paradoxical effect of an unmoving statue of a rider on a perpetually running horse or of drum-taps on a single note that, for all their haste, never move a vibratory millimetre from themselves, and for all their calculable number are no more than one. Behind them all the one creative lifemoves, and its laws are laws of its own being, the enactments of the centre that are current at every point of the circumference, and infuse into things relative the mystery and allurements of the absolute without which there can be no aesthetical joy or spiritual bliss. Every single art carries the qualities of all the arts; every



artist, in skill or taste, is of the lineage of the Sun· God of the ancient Celts, Lugh of the Long Hand who was Master of every art.

The subjective arts differ from the objective arts in that their character and effect are realisable only by mobile processes that convey them (by sight, or hearing, or both) from the mind of the creative artist to the mind of the artistic spectator or auditor. Movement is the essential condition of their fulfilment. As an art (not as a piece of read literature) drama comes into being in enactment on the stage from the rise of the first curtain to the fall of the last, through words that call up a succession of expressed emotions and thoughts. Dance lives by visual rhythmical movement, music by audible rhythmical movement. Poetry, resting in a book, immobile as a statue, declines to disclose itself unless the eye sets out on a journey along an external flat surface, and in collaboration with the inner eye causes the imagination to perform the subjective miracle of rising from unseen level to level of feeling, from height to height of impalpable thought, through mounting phase after phase of bodiless activity.

In this characteristic of movement, common to the subjective arts, the present has one of its most beneficent directive agents towards the future, and the future one of the most certain means for the highest fulfilment of its inherent and as yet unknown potentialities; and this not only in those special human activities that we call the arts, but in the other activities, lower in quality but

equal in necessity, that make up the art of living. But the movement capable of rendering this service to life cannot be of the nature of the irresponsible gadding about of dilletanteism or the unpredictable eruptions and zigzagging of egotism or ambition such as made hay of pre-war political prophecies by letting loose the dictators of Italy and Germany on a world that was approaching democracy. The creative movement that humanity needs must have within it the qualities that distinguish artistic movement from mere going from one thing to another at the whim of desire or circumstance; it must have intention and direction, assurance and order. The practice and appreciation of the subjective arts, given an integral place in education, cannot help exercising a potent influence in this respect; they are bound to put the at present unregulated and arbitrarily restrained impulses of humanity within the natural disciplines of artistic law, and percolate from these into the stratifications of human organisation and action.

To the aesthetical qualities that I have set out above as communicable to individual character and ability by the practice and appreciation of the arts, and transmissible through the individual to the collective life for its regeneration, there are two phases of artistic technique that are common to all the arts, but are specially encouraged by the subjective arts. For any artistic purpose whatsoever, materials suitable to the purpose have to be obtained, and within their kinds have to be graded to need. The most impressive Cuddapah slab would feel awkward

if given the work of ivory inlaying for a Maharaja's throne. The most brilliant silken ropes would be soundless as vina strings under even the late Seshanna's magical fingers; and among vina or fiddle or piano strings, those of low vibration cannot usurp the office of those of high vibration. Otherwise, there would be sound but no tune, even as in the performance of life (to point the social moral) there is much noise, but little music, because the pulling of strings is not done after the good manner of art but with the bad manners of dissonantly seeking the good of oneself with no regard for the harmonious welfare of the others. In the building of the edifice of the future, no aesthetically endowed craftsman will give any more than an amused ear to the stone, obviously of the weight suited for the foundation, that claims a place in the ornamental facing of the top storey, along with its uncle or grandfather, on the ground that it belongs to the same igneous or sedimentary era as they do. The plans and specifications of the House of Life will contain no provision for geological communalism. There is no nepotism in the arts. The phase of artistic technique here referred to is that of *selection*; of the perfect suitability of the item to the work in hand. This is a basic essential in the creation of a new human order; a power of imagination and an ability of skill that art-activity (widely and wisely practised, not as a stunt or an accomplishment or an aid to commercial mendacity, but as a natural release and embodiment of what Rabindranath called the surplus age of life) can

make undeniable and invincible in rearing the edifice of the future.

The other phase of artistic technique that the subjective arts specially encourage is the bringing of the selected materials together in such wise that each item finds its inevitable place in the artistic unity, its own place, not another's. There is an aesthetical moral for the future here also, in this essential of artistic creation which I have long studied in all its bearings as the central aesthetical and individual and social process of *integration*; the putting of the right thing in its right place for the right purpose, a purpose of which it is not merely a servitor but in which it is an essential collaborator. Two effects are involved in this: one, the development of the ability to perform the integrative process; artistically to put the right colour on the right spot on paper or canvas or silk, socially to put the right person to the suited work within the total and thus to fulfil a central need of leadership: the other effect, the development of the essential complementary ability of accepting one's part, not with the pious fatalism of a finger everlastingly on the hand of a masterpiece of Praxiteles, but with the assurance of a theme in a ragam or a sonata that knows it will turn up at various points in the elaboration of the whole musical idea, and that the ragam or sonata could not exist without it.

These phases of artistic technique, selection and integration, are, I have said, specially encouraged by the subjective arts, which are the arts of movement. In these

arts rapidity and exactness find more play than in the immobile arts. In the creation of a building one can, if necessary, pull down a terrace or a turret and rebuild it; but a false step or incongruous *mudra* (hand gesture) in a dance cannot be retracted; there is no going back and wiping out a wrong note in the singing of a song; a mistake in a word may destroy the atmosphere of a line or stanza of poetry.

The encouragement of rapidity and exactness in selection and integration by the practice of the mobile arts is of special importance in the transformation of the arts into the art of organised life in our time, because of the desire for speed that partly created time-saving devices like shorthand and typewriting in commerce and journalism, and because of the necessity of ever-increasing speed in warfare that has thrown the inventive capacity and mechanical skill of humanity into the fabrication of munitions of war and their rapid conveyance from place to place. Speed, as mere speed, is essentially vulgar and merely sensuous, and is detrimental to attaining in oneself and bringing into collective affairs the spiritual quality that is the antiseptic of life, an attainment only possible in quiet. Yet speed has to be reckoned with as an at present inescapable phase of external life, with the hope, rather, with the assurance, that, when the principles of the arts become integral in the imagination and expression of humanity, the inartistic craze for haste will subside into the rhythmical mobility through

which the creative impulse may worthily fulfil itself in the arts and life of the future.

So far with regard to characteristics and influences common to the subjective arts. But each of the arts, immobile as well as mobile, by means of its particular materials, tools, instruments and accessories, appeals through certain external and internal organs to consciousness with varying degrees of power, intensity, breadth, direction and beauty. Painting is addressed to the eye alone; music to the ear alone. Notwithstanding the cross-use of terms of one art for qualities of another art, one does not *listen* for the "tone" of a painting, or *look* for the "colour" of a piece of music. Such cross-terms are symbolical, not actual. They signify what Plato would call archetypical qualities behind their external versions of them; as light, that is common to the sapphire midday of South India and the tremendous sunset over the Atlantic Ocean, once illuminated the evening hours of the Mughal Emperors from behind a thin screen of running water in the Shalimar outside Srinagar, and now, at the preposterous climax of an unaesthetical civilisation, shows the way in flares downwards to death and destruction. Dance, in its Indian forms, which place it among the creative arts, is a visual-audible art; sculpture animated by a living idea, and set in motion within a design which, though static on the director's plan, is created by the dynamic movement of the dancer in interpreting the story by the words and specially rhythmical music. Here creation and appre-

ciation are simultaneous and reinforce one another in their interplay between the artist and the spectator-auditor ; unlike the immobile arts whose originators may be as dead as Michelangelo whose painted ceiling in the Sistine Chapel and vastly designed roof in St. Peter's Church in Vatican City have not felt the touch of the master for four centuries.

At each end of the subjective group of arts is one that in a curiously different way is the same as the other in being inclusive of the other arts, that is, drama and poetry. There is, as I have already indicated, a certain degree of crossing-over of qualities between all the arts. But this arises from a deeper affinity than that of the external expression, and varies from art to art in quality and quantity. Music may be performed in a building ; but it might be stretching analogy too far to speak of the *ragam* (scale) of the Examination Hall of the University of Madras, though, in another artistic connection, the *ragams* inspired a remarkable series of paintings of the Jaipur school. In the case of the two subjective arts to which I now refer—drama and poetry—each includes, as essential elements of its technique, a number of the other arts ; but whereas the inclusion in drama is almost completely objective (a curious thing for a subjective art, yet a fact, as we shall see), the inclusiveness of poetry is completely subjective. In the days of the Grecian drama, stage setting was unknown ; in the Elizabethan drama it was rudimentary ; in both, the immediate surroundings of the dramatic action were left to the imagina-

tion of the audience, which gave the play full chance of being heard and understood. Whether the change to pasteboard castles and canvas trees, to real candles signalling through unreal windows, was detrimental to appreciation by introducing an irrelevant visual distraction, or is no more of a distraction than nothing once one becomes used to it, may be left to posterity to discuss. I have myself encouraged Indian schoolboys to create wild waves for the persecuted Prahlada to swim through out of cardboard painted brilliant blue with white crests, and swung from side to side in a manner quite unknown to undramatic waves, but with such imaginative intensity that they produced (almost, happily not completely) the sensation of sea-sickness. Per contra, South India has kept up the Grecian and Elizabethan tradition in the person of gentlemen amateurs who will conjure up Hamlet's "inky cloak" in a white curtha, and recreate, in both characters, Othello murdering Desdemona, and other such charming tales for the young that William Shakespeare has become famous for. In this stage-setting, drama annexed both architecture and painting. Its characters are mobile statuary, and their movements, for all their apparent spontaneity, are as prearranged and deliberate as those of the Indian dance. The language through which the essential drama lives, even in the prose drama of daily life and the back streets, can only be dramatic by being as selected and meaningful as the language of poetry, and in the poetical drama (now temporarily in eclipse) must rise to the cadence



and quality of music. Drama has within itself six of the other major arts—architecture, sculpture, painting, dance, music, poetry, all objective (four tangibly, two audibly) to the drama, which is a purely subjective experience imparted by audible and visible movement.

Poetry, the second art referred to as the vis-a-vis of drama in its inclusiveness, also contains six of the other major arts, but all a sublimation of objectivity into subjectivity, an evocation of the essential qualities of the objective arts, and a verification of their metaphysical unity. The study of the architecture (the ground plan, the superstructure, the finial) of a poem is a training in the fundamentals of the lyric of individual integrity and the epic of national life, with the advantage over immobile stone or steel or timber, that the building within the imagination can be looked at either through the red to rose light of the various grades of feeling, or the yellow to golden light of the various degrees of intellect. Sculpture, and its related art of carving, in poetry is the creation of subjective images of persons and things with a vividness at least equal to that created by solid external objects of art. Description and figurativeness are the poetical counterparts of painting. These qualities, be it here said, do not exist in the same proportion in every poem. One of the capacities of high value that the practice and appreciation of the arts can encourage in the post-war mind, with beneficent effect on its expression in human organisation, as against the imperialisms of thought and feeling and action that would impose a non-

human and sterile uniformity on views of life or cultural taste or social organisation, is delight in the disproportionate qualities of art-achievements. The search for sameness is the search for death, not for the variety of life. But the search for similarities, for variations of the same, with the one test of their service to life in their encouragement of those things that manifestly make for its elevation and purification, is the pleasure of aesthetical criticism; and in a wise future, aesthetical criticism will, through an education in which art is central, be transmuted into all other forms of criticism (political, social, international, racial and the like) to the incalculable improvement of individual and collective life. As a marked example of qualitative disproportion in English poetry, one can turn at leisure to Swinburne, and observe how qualitative disproportion is sometimes complemented by quantitative disproportion in the manner in which his lack of sculptural solidity is met by his gorgeous and fascinating excess of word-painting and verbal music. In contrast to this one can note in the poetry of AE the counter-balancing of a uniform absence of the sculpturesque quality by an equally uniform delicacy of imagination in which solidity and sharpness of outline would be an inartistic incongruity.

Drama in poetry is the recounting or suggesting of events, and the two poets just mentioned give us a comparison of disproportion in this, as well as in the matter of the sculpturesque and picturesque qualities of poetry. Swinburne's special interest in human psycho-

logy, as distinct from the Shakespearean interest in human character, sets his personages moving in a haze of exaggerated excitement in which personality is thinned down to neurotic and erotic obsession, with the result that the great sanities are drowned by simulated cries of the frustrated gratification of the mere animal propensities, and the fine humanitarianism and lofty vision of the poet is fitfully caught through high-pitched rhetoric that, given his name on the title-page, is a mockery of the poet's authentic voice. The stage of the quality of drama in AE's poetry is lifted high above that of Swinburne's, lifted from the level of sentimentalised animal desire to that of spiritual aspiration, to somewhere near the level of Indra's heaven in which Bharata set the stage for the enactment of the cosmic drama. One poem of AE's, "The House of the Titans," eight hundred lines of blank verse, a piece of myth-poetry as great as Keats' "Hyperion," but with a vision and an esoteric profundity far beyond the reach of the unfulfilled youth, is the nearest approach to the substantiality of drama in his work, and could be delivered in a set of impressive speeches, with the "stage directions" recited after the manner of the Greek chorus. The rest of his poetry tells only of one event, but surely the most dramatically significant in the range of human experience; the struggle of the spirit back from the bondage of individual embodiment to the freedom of unity with its universal source. But the single-toned (mono-tonous) nature of the theme is echoed in many keys from many levels and angles of

conscious life, as though a Brahms in words made variations on a theme received by an Irish Schumann from the spirit of a Beethoven to whom the universe told its central secret. What this poetry lacks in the stiffness and clarity of the dramatic quality, it makes up for in the exaltation and universality of its theme, and in its unique fulfilment of the ancient Welsh triad that said that the "three dignities" of poetry are, "the true and the wonderful united; the beautiful and the wise united; art and nature united."

The quality of dance in poetry is felt in its movement, its syllabic "foot work" directed through the shapes and repetitions and variations of the verse-form which is of the nature of architecture.

The music of poetry consists in the sound-quality of its words singly and in successions. Poetry was originally intended to be heard; and even though in the age of print its first appeal, save in occasional recitation, and in poetical drama, is to the eye, its special aesthetical test is by its conformity to the musical responses of an inner ear. One could demonstrate the verbal music of poetry by many familiar text-book examples. I shall do so, however, by a single eight-line piece into which I turned a song by a Kanarese poet, a former pupil of my own in English who absorbed the principles and qualities that I disclosed to him and translated them into his own language, and is now given a high place in the modern poetry of Mysore; A Lakshman Rao Hoysala.

## INSPIRATION

His head is wrapped in clouds of thought,  
Till vision suddenly has caught  
A gleam that on the darkness flings  
The secret and the source of things.

Then, while from cosmic players comes  
The mighty rhythm of monstrous drums,  
A little lyric leaps along  
To join the universal song.

Apart from the musical quality of the foregoing lines, the little poem, slight though it may appear, expresses a view of life and its application to not only the art of poetry but to all the arts that comes to the poet out of racial heredity.

I have said before that Aesthetics does not concern itself with doctrinal matters. But, apart from the verity of the teachings and claims of various schools of thought and observance, Aesthetics has a very definite interest (under the influence of post-war necessity) in the aesthetical quality that views on art may transmit to objects of art and through them to the technique of individual and group life. The poetry that looks for its inspiration to physical or imaginative sensualism (like that of Ernest Dowson and others of his time who rhymed of wine not because of its ancient symbolism of spiritual ecstasy but because of its fever of intoxication, and rhymed of

roses not because of their reflection of the "Rose of all roses" but because of their suggestion of voluptuous boudoirs), has an effect on the reader that is manifestly different from poetry that rises out of a traditional acceptance of a spiritual basis of life, like that of Kalidasa long ago, or a temperamental desire for "the things that are more excellent," like that of William Watson in our own young days. It may be that Robert Browning was an optimist because he was Robert Browning, a matter that has behind it the hoary controversy of free will and determinism. But the evident fact that Robert Browning's personal poetry is optimistic, whether its creator was a congenital optimist or not, is a matter of concern to Aesthetics by reason of the power of transmission of even the two-minute optimism of his last poem with its healthy influence on mind and body.

The conception of an idealistic source of poetical inspiration which is both without and within the poet (like Hoysala's "little lyric" that "leaps along to join the universal song") is expressed in Rabindranath's lines translated from Bengali verse into English prose as follows:

What divine drink wouldst thou have, my God,  
from this overflowing cup of my life ?

My poet, is it thy desire to see thy creation  
through my eyes, or to stand at the portals of  
my ears silently to listen to thine own eternal  
harmony ?

Thy world is weaving words in my mind, and  
thy joy is adding music unto them.

Thou givest thyself to me in love, and then feelest  
thine own entire sweetness in me.

We miss the music of the original Bengali in the translation, but its emotional and intellectual substance is unimpaired. The poet puts a question as to the cause of the impulse to song that is in him. It arises, he knows, out of the surplusage of his response to the universe, and for the satisfaction of a being deeper and larger than his own. But why? He answers the first question by a second in double form: Am I the eye and ear of a poet of the universe to whom I am also a voice? One thinks of Shelley's "Hymn to Apollo" and its haunting assertion:

I am the eye by which the universe

Beholds itself and knows itself divine.....

and again of Jeans' analogy between the laws of nature and those which a poet obeys in composing a sonnet. Rabindranath does not answer his questions in so many words; but throws into a sentence the verbal technique and aesthetical quality of his experience of the creation of poetry, and similarly throws into a sentence the relationship between the individual poet and the artist who plays on his cosmic flute the Tune of the Infinite; and out of these we derive the aesthetical bent of his mind, to wit, that his poetry comes out of a collaboration within him of two operations of the one universal consciousness in which all things exist; the one calling out of his

verbal memory and putting into patterns the words that on the human side represent the *things* of the universe, the other imparting to the patterned words the joy that he derives from the universal ecstasy of creation—joy that expresses itself not in the plain statement of prose but in the rhythm and colour and music of poetry. But deeper than this collaboration of the universal and the individual in poetry (in all the arts, but particularly in poetry through the revelational power of the magical suggestiveness of words), there is, in the creative artistic operation, an interchange of being; a giving initiated on the side of the universe; an acceptance on the human side in heightened aesthetical sensibility and deepened vision; a return, from the human side, in the creation of objects giving, through the limitations of the Arts, individual versions of universal characteristics and qualities; and a fulfilment on the side of the universe in a recognition of its own “creation” and its “own eternal harmony” through the pellucid eyes and vibrating ears of the poet. The effect of so exalted a view of his art is seen in every line of Rabindranath’s poetry in a clear sweetness that is never sentimental, a calm that is never stagnant, a courage that is never braggart, a power that is never tyrannical, a beauty that is never sensuous, a figurativeness that is always intelligent and illuminating; qualities each of high value for the purification of the thought and feeling and action of the future, and together an extraordinary gift from one man in our time in this favoured land for the regeneration of humanity.



I have dwelt at considerable length on the art of poetry, not, I hope, merely with the prejudice of the sandal-maker in favour of leather, but out of a realisation of the characteristics and qualities that make poetry a peculiarly potent agent among the arts for the creation of a new World-Order.

I have touched on certain of the characteristics and qualities of both poetry and the other arts, by way of spreading out the aesthetical morality of these lectures and avoiding the inartistic disproportion of tacking on the whole moral as a weighty appendage. Let us now, as a penultimate conclusion, make a short survey of the subjective arts, with the post-war question in mind, as to the influences they can exert on the human consciousness and its external expressions in a future world-order.

In all eras of special excitement, especially in times of protest and agitation in which flags can be waved bearing idealistic or self-assertive words ("liberty, equality, fraternity" at one time and place, "Sinn fein, sinn fein, awan"—ourselves, ourselves alone—at another) *drama* has been an important means of influencing the minds of the largest number at a given moment. In our time the two most potent movements in the drama were not only intellectually and socially revolutionary, like the one-man plays of Ibsen and Shaw, but politically revolutionary. The first of these movements was the Irish literary and dramatic movement that began in the first decade of the century. Despite an intention that was almost entirely artistic and largely mystical, it created an expansion of

national dignity and free imagination that was not the least of the complex of influences that caused the disruption and reorganisation of 1916 and after. The other dramatic movement of our time was that in the wake of the Russian revolution, whose leaders used the collective technique and collective influence of the theatre for the spreading and establishing of the economic and political ideas for the fulfilment of which the revolution had been brought about. In the anticipation of the future, dramatic genius will probably be set alight, with reflection on social speculation, and probably, and from the aesthetical point of view desirably, with a dimming of the electroliers of society scandal and of the sputtering flames of sensuality and criminality at which so many like to warm the thin hands of their imaginations and on which the post-war mind is likely to have something unparliamentary to say. But apart from the sporadic outbursts of genius, a vast stimulus is offered by the immediate future to the universal human tendency to make-believe, with its ordinary quick reaction and occasional garlands, and its extraordinary opportunity of doing something that will not only make reputations for the individual creators of drama and the collective expressors of it, which is the least reprehensible of the motives of art, but will give to world-wide appreciation the satisfaction of high world-service through an enterprise in which all the world will be concerned.

Associated with the stage in the scattering of influences will be the talking picture, whose most popular

feature is the drama. Appropriately this modern application of mechanical ingenuity to human necessity for diversion modestly calls itself an industry—the cinema industry or the film industry—since its notable achievement is the industrious creation of stars and magnates by developing the most expensive machinery for the fabrication of the cheapest quality of mass entertainment. Here a great act of purgation will be demanded by the aesthetically-minded future; is, in fact, being anticipated even now by a demand for the preparation of the talking picture for the wide, if artificial, influence it can exert in the dissemination of creative ideas for the future, by being cleansed of the pruriency by which, for the sake of profits, it inflames the imaginations of the young, and degrades the relationship of the sexes. This applies not only to India as a sharer in the world-wide aesthetical impoverishment of humanity through the depression of personal participation in the healthy activity of drama-making. It applies specially, perhaps uniquely, to India because of the cinema mixture of religion and sex that performs the double evil service of stimulating an impulse that needs no stimulation and to the extent that it is over-stimulated becomes a debasing poison in the imagination; and of lowering the exalted conceptions of the Hindu deities by associating them with a sentimentality that is beneath the dignity of even rudimentary humanity. The pull in this direction is not of recent origin or indigenous to India. I think the silent film on the life of Vasantasena (otherwise known as “The Clay Cart”)

was about the last of that phase of the "industry." I was given the job of writing the English titles in verse couplets. I kept to the story; the verses alone would have made an interesting metrical summary of it. The film was taken to Germany to be cut after the best modern style. The modern style consisted in reducing the fine phases of the old dramatic story and emphasising the incidents related to the "love interest"—as if love was a mere physical obsession and human beings were rutting animals. In the religious drama of Japan, the Noh, there is never a moment in which it falls below aesthetical dignity and a chaste if peculiar beauty; and its audiences behave as in the presence of a solemn mystery. But the theatres and cinema-halls of India are not places of reverence. A nation that degrades its Gods and Goddesses below the strict necessities of an unavoidable human symbolism has taken the shortest cut to its own cultural and aesthetical demoralisation; and the inartistic and materialistic creators of the means to such demoralisation are asking for a condign reckoning at the hands of the future. It is to be hoped, however, that public resentment at the exploitation of the film for purposes below the high and influential contribution that it can make to the creation of a new world-order will overtake destiny by demanding and supporting cinema drama whose subjects and presentation will conform to the highest aesthetical principles and qualities.

Those who, in the west, like myself, remember the shallow quadrilles and lancers, the insipid Sir Roger

de Coverley, the unintelligent waltzes and polkas and other dances that our pious parents (bless their starched and ironed souls) regarded as Satanic revels, know to what an extent the inherent impulse to rhythmic movement has since developed in fox-trots, cake-walks, and other forms of dynamic jollification. But along with these there grew up an interest, world-wide in extent, in interpretative and collective dancing that is an event of aesthetical significance for the western world. New conscious artistic qualities were imparted to former narcotic and later stimulating dances by the individual performances of Maud Allen, Isidora Duncan, Anna Pavlova, Ruth St. Denis and others. The desire for collective dancing (like the desire for choral singing, both expressions of a growing aesthetical democracy) produced large groups in, among others, the Russian and Swedish ballets and English followers of them. It remains to be seen after the war to what extent that event frustrated, or perhaps has intensified by temporary suppression, the development of the influence of the Indian dance on the artistic imagination of the west. That influence began largely with the revival of the Kathakali (dance-drama) in the south-west, which attracted visitors from beyond India, and impressed them not only with its extraordinary technique but with its use as an impressive medium for conveying religious and philosophical ideas by a collaboration of dance and song. From the aesthetical point of view, with the post-war question in mind, the recent spread of interest in this and other forms of

Indian dance (the Bharatanatya in the south, the Khatak in the north, and others) is a very acceptable influence for the future, since the practice and appreciation of the interpretative dance exerts a desirable influence both on the sensorium in discipline, rhythm, quickness, accuracy, and individual participation in a collective effort to create an artistic unity, and on the health of the physical body by which, or the absence of which, the expression of the higher aesthetical qualities can be helped or hindered.

The influence of music has long been recognised. Students of English will remember Dryden's "Alexander's Feast" and the "Song for Saint Cecilia's Day." But many centuries before Dryden the Greeks had created Orpheus and his lute and the Celts Dagda and his harp. Biblical story tells of the influence exerted on King Saul by the harper David. The Finnish epic, the "*Kalevala*," tells of a mob being subdued by music. The Arabs used to say that music fattened their sheep. A wound on Ulysses was healed by music. Pythagoras used music as both a physical and mental curative agent. Indian workers pull their road-rollers, lift and lower their well-poles, and set their paddy-plants, to song. Within recent years the bringing of music by radio into hospitals has proved of the utmost benefit.

In this latter use of music, the matter of diagnosis and dosage is as important as it is in the administration of medicines. So it is as regards the aesthetical effects that are our special concern. The legendary influence

of kinds of music is now an established fact. The music of the descent of the holy grail, as Wagner composed it, can draw the soul upwards to meet the descending mystery. On the other hand his Venusberg music, and much of the music of Strauss, can draw the imagination, particularly of the adolescent, into the abyss of sensuality. Indian music is saved from much of this latter danger, since it is concerned chiefly with religious themes, and with the technique of singing and playing. But a threat has come to it through the talking films that feel it necessary to pander to their audiences by introducing songs that degrade the age-long tradition of the real Indian music.

With this in mind, and the bearing of aesthetical influence on the future, we can realise the aesthetical and political wisdom that was combined in the statement attributed to Damo, the last of the Pythagoreans, by Plato, that "one cannot touch the musical modes without disrupting the constitution of the State." Modern English musicians, John Foulds and Cyril Scott, have published weighty volumes demonstrating the truth of the ancient Grecian idea as shown in the parallel changes of music and politics in the western world and their affinities in character. On their showing, it is not unthinkable that the coincidence of the jazz era in music and the era of broken rhythms and weird noises in international relationships is not mere coincidence, but signals a warning affinity between rises and falls of aesthetical quality and rises and falls of political sagacity. But

whether this be so or not, the demonstrable influence of music on individual temperament and action, with its further influence on other individuals and on group tendencies, is a matter that calls for the attention of those who desire to help towards a real world-order.

I have already indicated some of the characteristics and qualities of poetry that make it a potent agent for regeneration of the aesthetical nature of humanity and through a new humanity to create a true new world-order. Its influence for good or bad is incalculable, through its concentration of the powers of the other arts, its intimacy of appeal, and its ready accessibility in handy books. A short poem in the memory may be a source of life-long joy or solace or inspiration; another may be emotionally poisonous or intellectually stupefying. In this, in all the arts as aids to meeting the necessity for the engendering of aesthetical quality in life from which may arise a good future, wise choice is essential if the creative and regenerative powers that are inherent in the arts and crafts are to be given full opportunity to exert their beneficent influences towards turning our dreadfully inartistic world of today into an "aesthetical phenomenon" tomorrow.













